



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
June 5 – 12, 2014

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture	2
Aboriginal Community Development	4
Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement	14
Aboriginal Education & Youth	17
Aboriginal Health	55
Aboriginal History	60
Aboriginal Identity & Representation	63
Aboriginal Politics	64
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources	90
Land Claims & Treaty Rights	101
Special Topic: Residential Schools	111
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations	152

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Art at heart of First Nations gathering

Frank PEEBLES / Prince George Citizen

June 5, 2015 09:45 AM



A hand-made cedar backdrop was built and painted especially for Nusdeh Yoh aboriginal choice-school. It was unveiled this past week as part of National Aboriginal Awareness Month activities. - Citizen photo by Frank Peebles

Art is an inroad to personal expression and fulfillment, and the kids at Nusdeh Yoh elementary school just got their inroads graded.

At a special assembly to launch National Aboriginal Awareness Month, the Prince George school devoted to First Nations culture made a show out of art and what it means as a representation of culture and of self. The school enjoyed a live dance performance thanks to cultural teacher Rose Thomas, displays of painting, drawing, masks, and other visual elements, a multi-media show recalling the school year's cultural awareness activities, and some oral presentation was also done - all by the students themselves. Teachers and other community consultants helped.

The assembly was also a chance to unveil a set of other school assets that were recently obtained, all to do with artistic cultural conversation. The first to be pointed out was a set of four large cedar plaques mounted on the gymnasium wall, each one inlaid with expertly-painted figures in aboriginal style, representing the four main clans of the resident Lheidli T'enneh First Nation: caribou, frog, beaver and grouse.

Other area First Nations have complementary clan systems and one of the main clans in the regional neighbourhood is the bear clan. The second new artifact unveiled at the arts assembly was a cedar podium carved and painted with the bear image.

The third and most prominent unveiling was a giant cedar backdrop that now dominates the back wall of the school's stage. It has matching cedar portable miniature walls on each side known in theatre parlance as "masking legs." These are also painted with aboriginal images: trees, water, a moon with background frog, a canoe with upraised paddles, and the school's mascot, the sturgeon.

Most of the carving and design work on these three sets of wood-based art was done by west coast artist Bo Smith. He had help from school staffers like Leanne Ball and Pam Spooner.

"I learned so much, in the creation of these," said Spooner, principal at Nusdeh Yoh. "The energy is in the wood. I've heard artists say that before, but now that I've done this, I know what they mean. The wood really does have a spirit."

Another partner in the arts event was Prince George secondary school. Nusdeh Yoh's community co-ordinator Alison Thibodeau set up a 12-week art program whereby a group of Nusdeh Yoh girls travelled each Wednesday to PGSS after school to learn art techniques from the older students. It was a way to get familiar with PGSS for their later years, a way to develop peer mentorship, and a way to deepen the younger students' artistic expression skills.

The theme of the project was anti-violence.

"Aboriginal females experience the most violence of any population segment in Canada," Thibodeau told the assembly as the art from this initiative was unveiled. "These girls put a lot into their art and also thought a lot about moving forward and how to understand feelings."

One of those involved in the artistic pursuits of the students at the school is local singer-songwriter-actor-artist Ivan Paquette. As a youth worker, among his many skills, he feels it his duty to provide leadership at the choice-school devoted to teaching the provincial curriculum but in ways that emphasize First Nations culture (non-aboriginal students are equally welcome at the school).

"When I started my career in the arts, I was eight years old, right here in this same school," said Paquette. It was called Carney Hill elementary school in those days.

"Most of these kids are from a similar background, or they can easily understand it. When you have empathy, that is power. You can aspire to your dreams and you reach those goals better when you work together and understand each other. Art is transformative."

"The kids here all have to earn the same academic credentials as any kid in any school in the province, but they feel a pride and a welcome to be themselves when they walk in here, even if you aren't aboriginal," said Spooner. "Art gives such a personal and cultural connection for everyone. It represents you, and it lifts you."

There is more to come for Nusdeh Yoh students, staff, parents and supporters during this National Aboriginal Awareness Month.

On Wednesday some of the students travel to PGSS to take in a live theatre production. On June 17, Grades 4-7 will put on a potlatch. On June 19, music mixer Phil Roy will be at the school to demonstrate how to mix beats for hiphop songs and let some of the students give this skill a try.

Then, on June 21, all walks of life in Canada are welcomed to express appreciation for aboriginal cultures here and around the world on the annual National Aboriginal Day.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/entertainment/local-a-e/art-at-heart-of-first-nations-gathering-1.1959226#sthash.aN402Syr.dpuf>

Aboriginal Community Development

Aboriginal Affairs' \$1B spending shortfall hits Quebec association hard

Quebec Native Women's Association, which lost \$175K in federal funding in 2015, reels from \$1B shortfall

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 06, 2015 10:41 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 06, 2015 10:41 AM ET



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt and NDP Leader Tom Mulcair attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Ottawa on Tuesday, June 2, 2015 in Ottawa. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press)

The director of the Quebec Native Women's Association says she's not completely surprised by the news that the federal government did not spend \$1 billion of its budget for aboriginal affairs in Canada.

The Quebec Native Women's Association recently lost \$175,000 in federal funding, which has jeopardized its ability to continue offering services to aboriginal people within the province.

Meanwhile, CBC News reported earlier this week that documents show Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada — the department responsible for delivering programs for Canada's indigenous people — has held back more than \$1 billion in promised spending for social services over the last five years.



NDP Leader Tom Mulcair stands and applauds as commission chairman Justice Murray Sinclair announces there should be an inquiry into missing and murdered women at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Ottawa on Tuesday, June 2, 2015. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt (left) did not stand. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press)

The Quebec Native Women's Association, which has been helping aboriginal people in their communities and in urban centres for the past 40 years, lost its \$175,000 in federal funding after its dossier was transferred from Heritage Canada to Aboriginal Affairs.

Viviane Michel, the director of the association, said that after funding was transferred from Heritage Canada to the federal Aboriginal Affairs office, the group was told it was not an "[aboriginal-representative organization](#)."

Michel said the lost funding covered projects that allowed the organization to go into Quebec's native communities and work directly with people there. It also helped to fund a project on promoting non-violence.

She said the association did recently get \$80,000 in federal funding for two specific projects related to housing and to governance.

But that barely makes up for the money lost, and it's not even a drop in the bucket of the \$1 billion left unspent by the federal government, Michel said.

Meanwhile, she continued, education, health and other social services and programs for First Nations and other indigenous communities across Canada are consistently underfunded.

"I think if the government was collaborative, we would have been able to get back the funding we lost," Michel said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/aboriginal-affairs-1b-spending-shortfall-hits-quebec-association-hard-1.3103266>

SNUG coordinator receives community justice award in Edmonton

By [Pamela Roth](#), *Edmonton Sun*

First posted: Friday, June 05, 2015 04:43 PM MDT



Award winner Kari Thomason, SNUG Coordinator with Metis Child and Family Services, poses for a photo during the 24th Annual Community Justice Awards at Government House in Edmonton, Alta., on Friday June 5, 2015. Ian Kucerak/Edmonton Sun

Thursday night was a tough one for Kari Thomason. At one point, the social worker with Metis Child and Family Services was surrounded by six sex trade workers, eager to share what's been happening to them as they walk the streets late at night.

By the time 1 a.m. rolled around, Thomason had talked with 19 girls working that night. Victims of unimaginable abuse, their stories are always heartbreaking to hear, even for a veteran social worker.

"It's scary. We got a few more bad date reports so it's sad," said Thomason, who also coordinates the organization's Project SNUG program with police, which helps sex trade workers leave their street life and find new beginnings.

"This isn't what our girls are worth. They're not a punching bag, they're not trash, they're not to be discarded and sadly they're still being treated like that. I'll be that voice for them until they get their own."

Thomason doesn't see her work as a job; it's what she lives to do.

But on Friday afternoon, she was among seven people throughout Alberta who received a community justice award for leading local community safety and crime prevention initiatives.

Nominations are submitted by members of the public. Michelle Hauser made the trip from Camrose to receive her award for the work she does with her furry four-legged partner, Lucy.

Working as the coordinator for the Camrose and District Victim Services Unit, Hauser learned that B.C. had a victim services dog and thought her city should have one too. Now it's not unusual to see Lucy in court to support victims of crime, especially if there's children in the witness room.

"She definitely calms them down. She just has that uncanny sense that she knows who needs her the most in the room and she will go to them first and then make her rounds," said Hauser. "I think dogs can work with victims where we as human beings can't reach them or they don't want to talk to us in the midst of their crime or tragedy; we can offer them Lucy."

Other award recipients include Cpl. Ryan Howrish with the Cold Lake RCMP for his innovative approaches to preventing and raising awareness of domestic violence; Terry Jordan of the Boyle Rural Crime Watch; Maggie MacKillop, who helped establish Alberta's first specialized domestic violence court, the Alliance Jeunesse Famille de l'Alberta Society; and the Safe Family Intervention Team -- a partnership between the Medicine Hat Police Service and the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/06/05/snug-coordinator-receives-community-justice-award-in-edmonton>

Manitoba pair saves 4 young kids trapped in burning shed

Jim Bender, Postmedia Network

Monday, June 8, 2015 2:54:44 EDT PM



Chasity Spence (left) and Arnold Culley from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (Nelson House) ran into a burning shack to pull out several children Saturday, June 6, 2015. Two six-year-old girls, a five-year-old girl, and a three-year-old boy were injured by the fire.

WINNIPEG — Two Nelson House, Man., residents are being hailed as heroes for saving four young children from a fiery death Saturday.

The children were trapped inside a burning storage shed behind a home in the northern Manitoba community when neighbours Chastity Spence and Arnold Culley rushed to the scene.

“I heard some kids yelling, looked out and saw the flames,” Spence said over the phone Monday. “I ran across the street in my bare feet and stuck my hand in but a little girl came running away from the fire. Arnold tried to jump right in but it was too hot. So, he went to the back of the shack and pried open a corner and the boy came out. I ripped the door right off and part of a wall, and got the other girls out.”

The door to the abandoned shed had been nailed shut but the kids had found a hole in a wall.

“After we got them out, the roof collapsed,” said Spence, who is seven weeks pregnant. “All I could think of at the time was getting those kids outta there.”

“Afterwards, it was really scary. Their skins were already peeling off and the girl who had run through the fire, her hair was orange. They all came to hug me and I tried to calm them down. After they let me go, they were screaming and screaming and screaming. It’s the scariest sound I’ve ever heard.”

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Chief Marcel Moody called the pair heroes.

“We’re really lucky that there were people who came to their rescue and saved them,” he said.

Deputy Chief Ron Spence, who is related to Chastity, arrived at the scene after the children were rescued and rushed them to the nursing station for treatment.

The injured include two six-year-old girls, a five-year-old girl and a three-year-old boy.

The three girls were taken to a Winnipeg hospital for treatment. One of the six-year-olds remains in serious condition. The boy was treated and released.

Authorities believe one of the children started the fire with a lighter, Moody said.

Three of the children are related and one is a neighbour, he said.

After taking the kids to the nursing station, Ron Spence tracked the parents down.

“One of the parents was really hysterical and I had to settle them down,” he said. “I told them the kids can’t see them like that or they could go into shock.”

Direct Link: <http://www.lfpress.com/2015/06/08/manitoba-pair-saves-4-young-kids-trapped-in-burning-shed>

First Nations woman turns to Facebook to find missing family

Oshie family near Kenora separated by mother's death, adoption in the 1970s

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 10, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 10, 2015 11:03 AM ET



Dorothy Oshie was three years old when she was adopted out of her First Nation near Kenora. Now her daughter is looking for Dorothy's sister. (Sarah Lott-Ward/Facebook)

A First Nations woman living in Alberta is hoping Facebook will help her locate her mother's sister who was adopted out of a First Nation near Kenora, Ont. in the early 1970s.

Sarah Lott-Ward posted a photo of her mother, Dorothy, as a child along with the limited information she has about her family on social media this week, asking for help to find Dorothy's sister.

She believes her auntie's birth name is May Charlotte, or May Charlene, Oshie. Lott-Ward said her own middle name is May, after the aunt she never met.

"She has always been in our minds and in our hearts," Lott-Ward said, adding her name is "always a reminder that she's still there, somewhere."



Sarah Lott-Ward shared this poster on Facebook in hopes of finding her auntie in Kenora. (Sarah Lott-Ward/Facebook)

There were three siblings separated and put up for adoption in Kenora after their mother, Mary Jane Oshie died, Lott-Ward said. Dorothy, the youngest, was born in 1968 at Minaki. Stan, the oldest, was born in 1962. The pair were reunited by coincidence.

Lott-Ward said when Dorothy was living in Toronto in her 20s, she met a very familiar looking man.

"They looked at each other and they're like, 'hey we look alike, what's your name?'" Lott-Ward said. "They got to talking and they realized that they had the same background story."

After that meeting, Lott-Ward said, the pair made up for their childhoods spent apart by becoming inseparable as adults, often talking about the sister they could not find.

Dorothy and Stan moved their families to Vancouver together, where Lott-Ward grew up, always feeling the absence of the missing limb on her family tree.

Dorothy died about five years ago and Lott-Ward said Stan's grief is still present.

'Just to know she's okay'

"I know that he would like to find his sister, just to know that she's okay and maybe that they could talk," Lott-Ward said.

The Facebook post has garnered some information that is making Lott-Ward optimistic at the prospect of new family connections, especially for her uncle.

"It gives me goosebumps thinking about his reaction and how happy it would make him," she said.

If you have information about the Oshie family you can get in touch with Lott-Ward at sarah.may.167@facebook.com

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-woman-turns-to-facebook-to-find-missing-family-1.3106749>

Editorial — First Nations are taking ownership

by [Editorial - Langley Times](#)

posted Jun 10, 2015 at 4:00 PM

The road to healing for First Nations people all across Canada got underway some time ago, although there have been many bumps along the way.

One of the most important acts, which was entirely symbolic but nonetheless critical, was the public apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008. This was issued to all the survivors of the residential school system, and it served to set into motion the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Over a six-year period, the commission has gathered plenty of evidence to show that, beyond a doubt, this painful part of Canada's past has affected present-day relationships between aboriginal people and other Canadians. The residential school legacy has also deeply affected aboriginal communities and families.

The commission's report made a host of recommendations. As mentioned in a [guest editorial from the Alberni Valley News](#), these need to be taken seriously and a plan looking at implementation needs to be drawn up.

However, it is important to point out that leaving action on these recommendations to various levels of governments — particularly the federal government — would likely

lead to more problems. The feds have responsibility for aboriginal relations but have handled the file poorly, throughout Canada's entire existence.

Governments have some very bad habits. One is to make solutions so complex, and involve so many layers of bureaucracy, that concrete action leading to genuine change is difficult. Often, it is impossible.

By contrast, First Nations across B.C. and in many other parts of Canada have taken important steps in recent years which will lead to real and meaningful change. They have done so by getting actively involved in the economy, education and other important areas. While it required court action to make provinces and Ottawa see the necessity of this, it is happening in many areas of the country.

Here in Langley, the Kwantlen First Nation has set up a successful business corporation which is creating jobs, leading to economic activity, emphasizing sustainability and, most importantly, leading to a new sense of purpose.

Similar things are happening in many other First Nations. Young, energetic leaders are taking action on many fronts to improve the lives of their people.

Direct Link: <http://www.langleytimes.com/opinion/306851701.html>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Stanley Cup rioter's First Nations heritage highlighted in sentencing

Judge refers to Truth and Reconciliation Commission in deciding sentence

By Eric Rankin, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 11, 2015 5:00 AM PT Last Updated: Jun 11, 2015 3:15 PM PT



Stanley Cup rioter Dawn Michelle Vanichuk has been given a break by the judge, because of her efforts to turn her life around — and because she's of First Nations heritage. (CBC)

Another Vancouver Stanley Cup rioter has been sentenced almost exactly four years to the day the massive public disturbance occurred, but the woman has been given credit by the judge, because of her efforts to turn her life around — and because she's of First Nations heritage.

Dawn Michelle Vanichuk, 27, of New Westminster, B.C., had pleaded guilty to taking part in a riot and assault causing bodily harm, after the Vancouver Canucks lost the Stanley Cup final on June 15, 2011.

She turned herself in after Vancouver police published photos of some of the rioters.

Judge Reginald Harris of Vancouver provincial court has handed Vanichuk a suspended sentence and 16 months probation. She could have faced up to 10 years in prison.

The court heard Vanichuk was intoxicated when she took the leg of a table smashed during the rioting and chased a female Good Samaritan. She then struck the victim in the face with her bare hand.

Her victim had been trying to stop vandalism and violence occurring on the Seymour Street side of the Hudson's Bay store. Vanichuk then entered the store through a smashed window and was seen with a stolen shoulder bag.

'First time aboriginal offender'

In delivering his decision on Wednesday, Judge Reginald Harris found that Vanichuk is "a completely changed person," having sought help for her addictions in 2013.

In addition to the suspended sentence, he ordered that Vanichuk perform 50 hours of community work service "in a First Nations setting, for instance a native education or resource centre."



Vancouver Canucks fans pose in front of a burning police cruiser during a riot following game seven of the NHL Stanley Cup final in downtown Vancouver on June 15, 2011 (Geoff Howe/Canadian Press)

Harris noted Vanichuk is "a first time aboriginal offender" and handed her the light sentence, citing a section of the Criminal Code that calls for "all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances" for aboriginal offenders, because of the historical mistreatment of First Nations people and their disproportionate representation in Canadian prisons.

The judge also referred to last week's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, which found decades of residential schools had amounted to "cultural genocide," stripping many First Nations people of their sense of family and identity.

Harris noted Vanichuk came from a broken, addicted family and that "she, too, is a victim of abuse."

The judge added that while he took into account Vanichuk's actions the night of the Stanley Cup riot, he balanced that with her own "remarkable actions toward recovery," which included her two years of sobriety and volunteer work in the community.

Vanichuk has been ordered to reappear before Harris in 12 months to ensure she has adhered to the conditions of her suspended sentence.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/stanley-cup-rioter-s-first-nations-heritage-highlighted-in-sentencing-1.3108807>

Police break First Nations woman's shoulder, charge her with assault

'They have this in-your face approach to policing,' Mishkeegogamang band councillor says



A judge says police injured a 'frail' First Nations woman in the course of her arrest on an unfounded charge. (File Photo)

A woman from Mishkeegogamang First Nation, north of Thunder Bay, Ont., has been found not guilty of assaulting police in an altercation that resulted in her shoulder and ribs being broken.

Bonnie Muckuck was charged with assaulting her partner and then assaulting an Ontario Provincial Police officer during her arrest outside Casual's Convenience Store in Pickle Lake, Ont., on October 16, 2013.

She was found not guilty on both charges, in a decision released last week by Justice Peter Bishop. He also ruled the injuries to Muckuck were caused by police at the time of her arrest.

"There is no other logical explanation for the causation of those injuries," Bishop wrote in his decision.

Officer says he was kicked in the groin

The officers involved in the arrest argued they were not the cause of Muckuck's broken shoulder and ribs. Const. Michael Vezina alleged that he was, in fact, the victim of an assault by Muckuck.

Vezina told the court that Muckuck resisted arrest, and when he was holding her at arm's length in front of the police car, she kicked him in the groin.

In his testimony Vezina said Muckuck screamed and kicked at the roof of the police cruiser once she was inside, actions he said he believed were inconsistent with someone being in pain.

Court documents show when Muckuck arrived at the police station she complained that she was in pain and had been hurt in the course of her arrest. Const. Brent Woolgar told her that she must have hurt herself earlier.

Paramedics were called and Muckuck was taken to hospital in Sioux Lookout, Ont. by ambulance where, according to court documents, doctors found her shoulder was broken, her arm was dislocated and her ribs were fractured.

Judge describes Muckuck as 'frail, bird-like'

"If the arrest happened the way Const. Vezina states, there would not be such serious injuries to her, namely a broken arm and broken ribs," Bishop wrote in his ruling. "Ms. Muckuck appeared as frail, almost bird-like when presenting her evidence in court."

As for Muckuck's screaming in the back of the police cruiser, Bishop said that was "consistent with being in extreme pain, being handcuffed to the rear and having her arm forcibly pushed up to affix handcuffs."

A band councillor for Mishkeegogamang First Nation, located 20 kilometres south of Pickle Lake, Ont. said he welcomes the not guilty decision in the case.

"Sometimes I believe the police are overly aggressive," Tom Wassaykeesic said. "They have this in-your-face approach to policing."

The police have a difficult job, Wasaykeesic noted, but said many First Nations members get wrongly accused of assaulting officers.

'Unnecessary' amount of force

"There are people who do resist [arrest] but in Ms. Muckuck's case, the amount of force was unnecessary for somebody that size," he said, adding that Muckuck is in her late 50s and is both short and slim.

Justice Bishop also found the initial charge that brought Muckuck to the attention of police to be unfounded. Testimony in the case shows it's unclear whether Muckuck was ever told the reason for her contact with police.

A clerk at a local store had called police when she said she saw Muckuck assaulting her long-time partner, Sanderson Loon, in the store.

Loon has since died of causes unrelated to the incident and "the court cannot find beyond a reasonable doubt that the altercation was anything more than consensual rough-housing," Bishop ruled.

The pair were at a picnic table outside the store "creating no further difficulties", Bishop wrote. "Very little, investigation, if any, was done by Const. Vezina."

No charges against officers

The province's police watchdog conducted an investigation into the conduct of officers in this case. The Special Investigations Unit concluded in July 2014 that no criminal charges are warranted against the officers involved.

Wassaykeesic said Muckuck may pursue a civil suit against police.

He said he admires Muckuck's courage in confronting police for their actions and hopes it inspires other people in the community to do the same.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/police-break-first-nations-woman-s-shoulder-charge-her-with-assault-1.3108279>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Aboriginal Affairs moves to limit child-welfare obligations despite TRC recommendations

[National News](#) | June 4, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) |



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

With the ink barely dry, Aboriginal Affairs moved to shelter itself from dealing with the subject matter of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's first five recommendations in its report released Tuesday.

The regional director general for Aboriginal Affairs' British Columbia branch sent a letter Wednesday to the province's First Nation child and family services agencies saying the department would no longer be part of tripartite funding and delegation agreements.

The change was interpreted as an attempt by Aboriginal Affairs to limit its responsibilities for First Nations child-welfare with a human rights tribunal ruling looming.

The “Delegation Confirmation Agreements” between Ottawa, the province and the First Nations agencies have been in place for about two decades. The agreements allow for the federal department to fund First Nations agencies in B.C.

“After careful review of the agreements, AANDC has concluded that delegating child-welfare responsibility is not within the department’s scope or authority,” said the letter from Eric Magnuson, regional director general for Aboriginal Affairs’ B.C. branch. “As provinces and territories have legislative authority over all child welfare and protection activities, the department has no legal role in delegation.”

The letter caught First Nations officials involved in child-welfare off-guard, since the tripartite agreements have been in place for years and the change arrived with little warning.

While no one was ready to comment on the letter because the issue was still being analyzed, one legal opinion to a B.C. First Nations organization concluded that it appeared the move is connected to the expected ruling from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations child-welfare.

The human rights tribunal is expected to soon deliver its decision on a complaint launched by Cindy Blackstock, the president of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations. The complaint alleges Aboriginal Affairs discriminates against First Nations children because it pays less to First Nations child welfare agencies than the provinces pay for the same off-reserve services.

The department has argued before the tribunal it has no responsibility for First Nation child-welfare services beyond cutting the cheques.

The department’s involvement with tripartite agreements in B.C., however, undercuts that argument. By ending its involvement in the tripartite agreement, the department appears to be trying to limit its exposure should the human rights tribunal side with Blackstock.

“When AANDC enters into and participates in agreements it indicates that they accept and recognize responsibility in that area,” said the legal opinion. “Now that the decision on the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society is imminent, this is a preliminary step in trying to reduce their fiduciary obligations (or other duties) in this area.”

Blackstock said she couldn’t comment on the letter until she consulted with her lawyer on its implications.

In order for a First Nations child welfare-agency to deliver services it needs the delegated authority from the province. Without the tripartite agreement, the agencies in B.C. would

now have to sign a separate delegation agreement with the province before signing a funding agreement with Ottawa.

Magnuson's letter said Aboriginal Affairs' financial and legal responsibilities are limited to what is spelled out in funding agreements.

The department's move to try to reduce its exposure and limit its responsibilities on First Nations child-welfare seems to ignore the first five of the TRC's 94 recommendations which deal specifically with child welfare.

The recommendations call on Ottawa to engage deeper on the issue with the provinces. The TRC called on Ottawa to publish annual reports on child-welfare rates and enact Aboriginal child-welfare federal legislation setting national standards.

The TRC report concluded that "Canada's child-welfare system has simply continued the assimilation that the residential school system started."

B.C. First Nations agencies have not received any increases to child-welfare prevention funding in about 24 years.

The department's own numbers show it is underfunding B.C. First Nations child welfare by about \$21 million.

Aboriginal Affairs spends about \$600 million funding 105 agencies across the country.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/06/04/aboriginal-affairs-moves-limit-child-welfare-obligations-despite-trc-recommendations/>

Manitoba aboriginals hire own child-welfare advocate after Tina Fontaine's death

Rod Nickel

WINNIPEG — Reuters

Published Friday, Jun. 05, 2015 5:14PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Jun. 05, 2015 5:16PM EDT

Aboriginal chiefs in the Canadian province of Manitoba said on Friday they have appointed their own advocate for native children and families following the killing of a 15-year-old girl who ran away from government care.

The move by Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is the first of its kind in Canada and highlights the mistrust between the country's long-marginalized aboriginal people and its institutions.

Earlier this week, a commission reported that Canada's decades-long, but now defunct, policy of forcibly separating aboriginal children from their families and sending them to residential schools had amounted to "cultural genocide."

The body of Tina Fontaine, 15, was found in a bag in Winnipeg's Red River in August, drawing national attention. The aboriginal girl was in the provincial government's care and had run away from a foster home. Police consider the death a homicide.

Manitoba's child welfare system also faces criticism for sometimes housing children in hotel rooms when foster and group homes are full.

The AMC hired its family and child advocate after it produced a report last year, "Bringing our Children Home," that said Manitoba's child welfare system was having a "devastating impact" on the community. The report recommended major changes.

"Right now our voices are not being heard," the newly hired advocate, Cora Morgan, said.

"We have a lot of families who are doing their best to get their children back and they're caught up in the system that misunderstands them."

Morgan said she would start by making sure families and children know their legal rights, and direct her influence to keeping children in their homes. But she said it was also important not to leave children in unsafe situations.

Aboriginals, who make up 4 percent of Canada's population, have higher levels of poverty and a lower life expectancy than other Canadians, and are more often victims of violent crime, addiction and incarceration.

The chiefs hope to "deconstruct a system that works on fear and isolation," said AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak.

Manitoba's left-leaning New Democratic Party government said in a statement that it would work with AMC and other native groups to improve the wellbeing of children and families. It said it plans to hire a deputy to Manitoba's children's advocate to focus on aboriginal issues.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-aboriginals-hire-own-child-advocate-after-girl-killed/article24829008/>

Addressing aboriginal education gap benefits all Canadians

Barrie McKenna

Ottawa — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jun. 05, 2015 6:44PM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Jun. 06, 2015 8:26AM EDT

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report contains an eye-straining 94 recommendations for righting the wrongs done to aboriginals in Canada – everything from erecting monuments to creating a national holiday.

If governments and aboriginal leaders are really serious about reconciliation they should focus on just one big thing: closing the shameful educational gap between aboriginals and other Canadians. Of course, it's about fairness, equality and improving the lives of future generations.

But education is also a clear economic winner. Any money and effort Canada invests to improve the educational outcomes of aboriginal youth will pay off. Those payoffs will be higher GDP growth, lower unemployment, increased tax revenue and reduced demand for health and social services.

The potential economic gains are significant, and quantifiable, according to a study slated to be released later this month by the Ottawa-based Centre for the Study of Living Standards. The new research, recently previewed at the Canadian Economics Association annual conference in Toronto, found that closing of the education attainment gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians would generate a cumulative GDP gain of up to \$261-billion (2010 dollars) between 2011 and 2031 and generate substantial savings for governments.

Improving the social and economic well-being of the country's 1.4 million aboriginals would pay huge dividends for all Canadians.

But it's a massive undertaking. The high school dropout rate for aboriginals is four times the national average at 41 per cent, and aboriginals have vastly lower test scores. On reserves, nearly six out of 10 don't finish high school.

The country can do better.

A model school project run by former prime minister Paul Martin's Aboriginal Education Initiative offers a glimmer of what's possible. The program, in place since 2010 at two Ojibwa First Nations in Southwestern Ontario, focuses on boosting reading and writing

skills with the help of specially trained teachers, intensive oral language training and buy-in from community leaders. Once dismal reading and writing scores at the schools have soared to at, or above, the provincial average.

Results don't come cheap. Replicating the program at the most remote First Nations communities would cost up to \$500,000 a year per school.

Numerous efforts are under way elsewhere to improve schools. In northern Saskatchewan, nine First Nations are working to create a unified school system. Some bands are seeking to close the gap by folding their schools into mainstream boards.

A key question is who should bear the cost. Education on reserves is a federal responsibility. Off-reserve, where most aboriginals live, is up to the provinces.

First Nations also need to take greater responsibility for fixing broken on-reserve schools.

One obvious source of funds is the vast natural resource wealth that exists in and around many First Nations communities.

The challenge is to make the best use of revenue from so-called "impact benefit agreements," signed between First Nations and resource companies. Evidence suggests that isn't necessarily what's happening now.

Most of the incremental revenue First Nations are generating from resource development, gambling and other ventures is being spent on band government, administration and economic development, rather than on more fundamental needs, according to new research by economists John Richards of Simon Fraser University and Mark Krass of the C.D. Howe Institute. Relatively little is being spent on education and health, based on a sample of audits from 130 First Nations in Ontario.

Without basic skills, many aboriginals will never be able to take full advantage of the available jobs and economic opportunity.

"You can't run good schools without some kind of professional structures," explained Mr. Richards, a professor of public policy.

Ottawa did have an education plan. Bill C-33 – the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act – would have boosted per capita spending on aboriginal students by as much as 25 per cent. But the legislation was shelved in the face of stiff opposition from aboriginal leaders.

Letting the problem languish again suggests the country will have learned nothing from the mistakes of the past, exhaustively chronicled in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 388-page report.

The best way to atone for the painful legacy of residential schools is to get education policy right. Do that, and all Canadians will share in the economic rewards.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/addressing-aboriginal-education-gap-benefits-all-canadians/article24832375/>

Yukon First Nations celebrate record graduating class

'It feels like this is the moment, this is where I should be right now'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 06, 2015 12:50 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 07, 2015 4:53 PM CT



At 132 graduates, the First Nations Class of 2015 is the largest in Yukon history. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Yukon First Nations have been holding their own graduation ceremony for four decades. This year there were 132 aboriginal high school graduates from 26 First Nations — a record number.

"First Nations' graduation has come a long way in the past 40 years," said grad organizer Kim Rumley. "Many instrumental people in the Yukon had amazing impacts on First Nations education in the territory."

At Friday's ceremony in Whitehorse, graduates came in accompanied by traditional drummers. Most were dressed in traditional or traditionally-inspired garment, making the event about fashion as well as marking their achievement.

Blayde Tippet of the Daylu Dena Council in Lower Post, B.C. wore a moosehide vest presented to him on Graduation Day. He says graduation was "a journey" and he is glad he returned to school to earn his diploma.

For aspiring photographer Naomi Geddes Helm, Friday's graduation was an important moment. "It's really inspiring and makes me happy to be First Nations," she said. "I'm just proud of who we are."

"It feels like this is the moment, this is where I should be right now," said Malachi Lavalee of Whitehorse. "I am glad that the future generation and everybody is realizing that graduating is important. We need to make a future for ourselves."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-celebrate-record-graduating-class-1.3103410>

Once a weapon, education is now key to reconciliation

Stories of Canada's native people need to be centre of education curriculum, Waterdown teacher says

By Nathan Tidridge, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 07, 2015 11:26 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 07, 2015 11:26 AM ET



Students from Waterdown District High School, in Waterdown, Ontario, created a Canoe Garden filled with native plants. It serves as a tangible reminder of the indigenous identity of the land. (Nathan Tidridge)

Everything changed for me the moment I walked into the entrance of Brantford's Mohawk Institute Residential School — called the "Mush Hole" by its survivors.

It was the smell that got to me. Thick and musty — a heaviness that clung to you even after you left. I remember looking into a cupboard where young children had been locked for days on end as a form of punishment. I could still smell the sweat and urine, see the scratches made on the inside.

As I listened in horror to the testimonies told by survivors I realized that as an educator I had a responsibility to take as many students as possible to bare witness to that place, as well as explore with my students what had happened in this country to allow such a program to exist.

The residential school program demonstrates how education was used as a tool to destroy culture. Now we must reverse this process and use the school system to integrate indigenous stories and our foundational treaty relationships into the everyday lives of non-indigenous Canadians.

When I became a teacher of Canadian history, I was very tentative about exploring the place of indigenous peoples in that history with my students. Resources were scarce and the curriculum did not ask us to dwell too much on the subject (fortunately, that has changed in Ontario).

For me, the history of the indigenous peoples was filled with names that were difficult to pronounce and an oral tradition that didn't fit well with my profession's book-centred and Euro-centric focus.

It wasn't until I learned from elders and knowledge keepers that a treaty was all about being in and respecting a relationship, that my perspective changed. Quite simply, I needed to understand that "treaty" was not a noun, but rather a verb.

Illegal soil

Last week the latest group of students from Waterdown District High School walked into the main entrance of the Mush Hole.

Their eyes lingered on the old wood paneling and copy of Stephen Harper's 2008 apology that hangs near where the office was once located.

As always, my friend and colleague Eugene Kahgee, from Saugeen First Nation, was there. His father was sent to the Mush Hole and could never bring himself to go back. My students were quiet as they walked through the rooms and saw the places where countless abuses occurred over the generations.

Leaving Brantford, we travelled to the New Credit Reserve to meet with Carolyn King. As part of the Mississaugas of the New Credit Nation's celebrations of the 2015 Toronto PanAm Parapan Games, Carolyn created the idea to establish canoe gardens that would link the reserve to the events across the golden horseshoe.

The gardens are filled with native plants, serving as tangible reminders of the indigenous identity of the land. My school had asked to host one of these gardens, and the students arrived in New Credit to collect the different plants that they would carry back home.

I was also given a bag of soil from the reserve — an illegal act under the Trading with Indians section of the Indian Act. We did it to highlight that while outside companies strip resources from indigenous territories across the country, it remains illegal for a native person to gift me soil from their garden.

Canoe garden an education piece

Back in Waterdown, we stirred the illegal soil into our canoe garden, burying paper hearts in its earth, linking it to the hundreds of heart gardens created for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that are dedicated to the thousands of children lost to the residential school program.

The garden will be maintained by the community as an active education piece, reminding people that they live in a treaty relationship with others.

"Today we begin to change the history of Canada." - *Justice Murray Sinclair*

Our students lived their treaty relationship that day. Future generations of students will visit and tend to the garden planted on the eve of the TRC final report, learning about their partners on the land.

As I think about that day, watching my students planting and watering the plants gifted to them by the Mississaugas of the New Credit, Justice Murray Sinclair's words fill my heart: "Today we begin to change the history of Canada."

"Canoes were traditionally used for transportation, to allow movement and to connect people," explained Tyler Alexis, a student tasked with creating a description of the garden.

"This canoe needs to be seen in the same light. It is a symbol for all peoples. A symbol of progress that moves the conversation forward."

The relationships between Canada and indigenous peoples must be placed at the very centre of our provincial curricula. It is the key to reconciliation.

Nathan Tidridge is a history teacher at Waterdown District High School and the author of *The Queen at the Council Fire: The Treaty of Niagara, Reconciliation and the Dignified Crown in Canada* (Dundurn Press, 2015). He lives in Waterdown, Ontario.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/once-a-weapon-education-is-now-key-to-reconciliation-1.3101232>

First Nations prepared to restart negotiations on education: Bellegarde

By Staff Global News, June 7, 2015 12:36 pm



OTTAWA – First Nations communities across the country are ready to re-open education negotiations with Ottawa, said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

“We just want the willing partner to come back to the table,” he said in an interview on [The West Block with Tom Clark](#). “Let’s redo this ... We want the good quality education for our children. We want the standards, but under First Nation’s control.”

Ottawa’s most recent offer on the First Nations education file was in Bill C-33, introduced in the House of Commons in April 2014. The so-called [First Nations control of First Nations education act](#) proposed increasing per capita spending for on-reserve students, putting close to \$2 billion of new money on the table.

The legislation was shelved, however, in light of the backlash the government received from a number of chiefs who said the legislation and funding didn’t give First Nations enough control over education; the notion of putting ministerial appointees at the head of the council overseeing on-reserve education went against the spirit of the First Nations’ demands, they said.

Looking at education framework for aboriginal students was one of the [94 recommendations](#) contained in final report of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), made public last week.



Bellegarde said that although all 94 recommendations are vital, addressing the education gap is one of the most important.

However Ottawa decides to address the commission's report will likely have to wait until the winter, or even longer, depending on when Parliament returns following the election scheduled for October.

As the federal election approaches, Bellegarde said he is hoping to increase the number of aboriginals who cast ballots.

Aboriginal voting numbers have been traditionally low, which is something the national chief said he and the other chiefs are trying to address.

Looking purely at numbers, the First Nations population in Canada can stand to affect 51 ridings, he said — but aboriginal leadership won't be encouraging their members to vote one way or another.

"We're not saying vote for the Liberals or NDP or Conservatives," he said. "I'm saying, just get out and vote ... because it's important. Because if you're a member of Parliament and you know that First Nations didn't vote, you're not going to care about our issues."

Bellegarde said he's just going to focus on getting First Nations' priorities on the main parties' platforms.

So far, the Liberals have endorsed all 94 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, and the NDP has gotten behind some.

"It really comes down to recognition of our rights as indigenous peoples and who is more in tune with that," he said. "You can look at each of the parties' positions and then make an informed decision."

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2040838/first-nations-prepared-to-restart-negotiations-on-education-bellegarde/>

Celine Cooper: Canadians should be taught about Canada's residential schools and their legacy

[Celine Cooper, Special to Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: June 7, 2015

Last Updated: June 7, 2015 2:41 PM EDT



Commission chairman Justice Murray Sinclair speaks at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Ottawa.

I grew up in Brantford, Ont. It is a typical Canadian town situated on the banks of the Grand River. When I lived there all those years ago, it had a reputation as a blue-collar, hockey-loving place. Its biggest claim to fame was being the home of Wayne Gretzky.

Then, as now, I was a passionate student of Canadian politics and society. So it's significant that despite spending most of my formative years in Brantford — plus a stint in Toronto working as a legislative page at Queen's Park — by the time I left for university at age 19, I knew very little about First Nations history.

As the groundbreaking Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its report last week, I was reminded how much my own lack of knowledge as a young person matters.

In a moving speech at the TRC ceremony in Ottawa, Governor General David Johnston said that too many Canadians do not know enough about Canada's residential schools and their legacy. He's right. One of the recommendations in the report is that the history of aboriginal peoples, the residential school system and its legacy become part of the curriculum, from kindergarten to the end of high school. I couldn't agree more.

Beyond the Wayne Gretzky connection, another important thing to know about Brantford is that it borders the Six Nations reserve, which is home to largest First Nations band in Canada, where all six Iroquois nations live together: Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca and Tuscarora.

My high school — like high schools everywhere — was a microcosm of larger social organization. It is one of the oldest educational institutions in Brant County (it is more than 100 years old). The original parts of the building were connected to newer additions by four glass breezeways. I remember the Senior "Jock" breezeway, the Grade 9 breezeway, the Grade 10 and 11 breezeway. And I remember the Native breezeway. Stereotypes had currency; I recall students laughing about not wanting to walk through for fear of being "scalped."

There were very few Aboriginal students in my classes. Under Ontario's streamed education system at the time, students in Grade 8 had to choose whether to go into basic, general, advanced or enriched classes. It was commonly understood that students from Six Nations were put directly into basic and general classes. Research has shown that this also meant they were less likely to go onto post-secondary education.

The TRC report notes that between 1883 and 1998, more than 150,000 aboriginal children were removed from their families and communities, many by force. These children were placed in state- and church-run residential schools. The report documents widespread physical, cultural and sexual abuse. Many were punished for speaking their native languages. Justice Murray Sinclair said that while the commission was able to document 3,201 student deaths, there is research to suggest that more than 6,000 children may have died. It's a shocking report to read.

Last week in Toronto, after leaders from all three provincial parties rose to recognize the TRC report, Speaker of the Ontario Legislature Dave Levac, who is also from Brantford, gave an emotional speech. He grew up a block away from one of Brantford's residential schools — the Mohawk Industrial School, known as the “Mush School” because the aboriginal children living there were fed “mush” from huge pots. “I crossed the playground every day when I went to school and I didn't know what I was watching,” he said. “And to some of those who are now friends of mine: I didn't know what was going on. To them, I say I'm sorry.”

You cannot tell the story of Canada without Indigenous people at the centre. Remember this.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/national/celine-cooper-canadians-should-be-taught-about-canadas-residential-schools-and-their-legacy>

New report highlights gaps in Ontario's public school system



CTV Toronto

Published Monday, June 8, 2015 1:52PM EDT
Last Updated Monday, June 8, 2015 6:15PM EDT

A new report from a provincial advocacy group says there are gaps in Ontario's public school system, including a lack of resources for special education students and inadequate teachers' training on aboriginal issues.

The report, titled "[The Gap Between Policy and Reality](#)" was released on Monday by the [People for Education](#).

According to the group, the student-to-teacher ratio in special education classrooms are the highest they've ever been in recent years. On average, there are more than 35 special needs students per special education teacher at the elementary school level, and nearly 80 per educator at the high school level.



A new report from a provincial advocacy group says there are gaps in Ontario's public school system, including a lack of resources for special education students and inadequate teachers' training on aboriginal issues

Many parents, including nine-year-old Spencer Powell's mother, believes this is potentially jeopardizing their child's education.

"I see teachers really stressed out ... being able to manage special needs takes up so much time," said Powell's mother, whose autistic son attends an Etobicoke school.

More training on aboriginal issues needed

The report also highlighted a need for improved training on aboriginal issues.

According to the report, only 29 per cent of elementary schools and 47 per cent of high schools offer teacher training on aboriginal issues. These are troubling numbers, according to the group's executive director, who says educators play an important role in delivering information about Canada's history.

"There is an ambitious curriculum and an ambitious policy in the province, but when we look at what's actually happening in schools, all kids aren't necessarily getting educated on aboriginal issues all the way from kindergarten through to Grade 12," Annie Kidder told The Canadian Press.

"Teachers for the most part say they are not comfortable teaching indigenous culture and issues."

Across Ontario, the report shows that 92 per cent of elementary schools and 96 per cent of high schools have aboriginal students.

Monday's report comes one week after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on the Ontario government to ensure all students are taught about the history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

That commission's report followed a six-year study of residential schools in Canada, which concluded the system was a "cultural genocide" that led to the deaths of more than 6,000 children.

"Reconciliation has to happen with everybody," Kidder said. "And education is key to making that happen."

Monday's report was based on a survey answers from nearly 1,200 Ontario principals.

The report made a number of recommendations, including adding a special education ombudsman at each school board.

With files from CTV Toronto's Naomi Parness and The Canadian Press

Direct Link: <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/new-report-highlights-gaps-in-ontario-s-public-school-system-1.2412142>

Shannen's Dream monument campaign launched by family member

Jules Koostachin raises Indiegogo funds to commemorate Cree student who fought for better schools

By Martha Troian, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 08, 2015 5:12 PM ET Last Updated: Jun 08, 2015 6:45 PM ET



Jules Koostachin has launched an Indiegogo campaign to raise money for a national monument to Shannen Koostachin. (Supplied by Jules Koostachin)

For Jules Koostachin, attending school in inner-city Ottawa was a bit of nightmare.

Too often, she was regarded as just the 'native kid' and even once called the 'savages' daughter.' Not being able to hear properly didn't help.

Koostachin remembers being unable to speak up in class and just shutting down.

"I remember wanting to do well in school, but I didn't know how."

It's that experience that inspired Jules to push for a national monument to Shannen Koostachin, the young Cree activist who fought for better schools for First Nations children. (Shannen's dad and Jules' mom are cousins, but Shannen and Jules never met.)

There are three days left in the Indiegogo campaign, that was launched last month, to raise the money to make it happen.

Shannen's Dream

Shannen was only a child when she publicly challenged the federal government to build a new school for Attawapiskat First Nation, her home in northern Ontario.

At the time, she and other children in Attawapiskat were schooled in portable buildings because the local school had been closed due to a toxic spill.

Attawapiskat finally had a new school built in 2014 because of Shannen's efforts. Unfortunately, she never saw it. Shannen was killed in a car accident on May 30, 2010 near Temagami, Ont. She had been living in nearby New Liskeard so she could attend high school.

Her challenge became known as Shannen's Dream and lives on as a campaign for improved schools and education for indigenous communities across the country.

Upward battle for Jules

It's something Jules, 43, wished she had growing up too.

Originally from Attawapiskat, the Koostachin family moved to Ottawa when Jules was just 4 years old.



Originally from the Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario, the Koostachin family left Moosonee for Ottawa when Jules was just 4 years old. (Supplied by Jules Koostachin)

Due to a hearing impairment, Jules was quickly labeled with a learning disability by the school system.

She felt like she couldn't ask an adult for help and even recalls school staff making fun of her mom whose first language is Cree.

"[I] failed miserably at school, my mom couldn't really help me with school," says Jules.

Jules' mom attended St. Anne's residential school in Fort Albany, Ont., when she was a young girl. Her mother's education only went so far.

"I grew up with my mom, who's first language was Cree. I grew up with my grandparents who only spoke Cree. They didn't speak English."

The family made frequent trips to the north to visit her grandparents, something Jules says helped shape her identity and it kept her close to her culture.

Eventually Jules attended Concordia University for its theatre program.

But struggled in the first couple of years.

"I basically had to start from scratch and I had to take ESL classes," Jules laughs, saying that's how bad her writing was.

Hope for the next generation

A mother now, too, Jules wanted to offer more to her children.

Not stopping, she completed her Masters at Ryerson University in documentary media. Jules will also be pursuing her PhD at the University of British Columbia.

Today, Jules shares her story with indigenous youth to hopefully help others overcome their hurdles in life and to believe in themselves.

She says she understands why Shannen wanted more, too.

"The fact that kids in northern Ontario have to relocate and be separated from their family, it's like a blast from the past," says Jules.

"Her motivation was to ensure, kids, any kids anywhere, have access to equal education," says Jules of her younger cousin Shannen.

In 2003, Jules says she had a vision of a national monument of Shannen. She called Shannen's father Andrew for permission. The family granted permission for Jules to proceed.

The monument will be located New Liskeard this coming fall, the same place Shannen died.

According to the Indiegogo campaign, the monument will be approximately 52 inches in height, prior to being mounted on a granite base, and will be cast in bronze. It will be a figurative depiction of Shannen wearing blue traditional regalia.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/shannen-s-dream-monument-campaign-launched-by-family-member-1.3105031>

TDSB proposes K-12 school that will give First Nations kids a sense of belonging

Proposal seeks to end the ‘experience of alienation’ aboriginal kids often feel at school, with curriculum that values indigenous skills and history.



Students at the First Nations School of Toronto - one holding an eagle feather - participate in a mock trial with Justice Harry LaForme, Canada's first aboriginal appellate court judge. The Toronto District School Board is considering opening up alternatives to aboriginal students by opening a full K-12 school in the former Eastern Commerce Collegiate building.

By: [Sara Mojtehdzadeh](#) Work and Wealth reporter, Published on Sun Jun 07 2015

A historic but near-empty Toronto high school best known for its basketball stars may soon have a new source of pride: housing the city's boldest aboriginal education program yet.

The Toronto District School Board will this week consider an ambitious plan to create a full kindergarten to Grade 12 First Nations school, in an effort to make learning more accessible to Toronto's estimated 7,000 aboriginal students.

The project involves converting the 85-year-old Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute — once celebrated for its basketball prowess and alma mater to former Raptor Jamaal Magloire — into a “culturally appropriate” school to “better serve the needs of the city's growing Indigenous population.”

“It's the experience of alienation that we have to address,” said York professor and aboriginal education expert Dr. Susan Dion. “First Nations, Métis and Inuit students don't experience education as theirs. School doesn't reflect who you are.”

The new school would aim to reverse that sense of alienation by creating a curriculum that values indigenous practices, from awarding credits for traditional skills like hunting to exposing kids to indigenous literature.

A scathing 2012 report by Dion showed that teaching staff in Toronto “lack understanding” about aboriginal history and culture, leaving many students feeling invisible and marginalized in the classroom. The high school dropout rate for indigenous students in Canada is 41 percent — four times the national average.

“There are a lot of very strong historical reasons, within our board and within the country in which we live, to be a part of the solution and to make sure we're doing right by First

Nations students in the TDSB,” said Jennifer Story, trustee for Ward 15, Toronto-Danforth, where Eastern Commerce is located.

The city already operates one aboriginal education program, the First Nations School of Toronto. But it only runs up to Grade 8 and has just 80 students enrolled. The new school would be significantly larger, with a projected enrollment of 600 students. Toronto’s young native population is growing nine times faster than the overall student population.

Priorities for the school include making it transit-accessible for the city’s scattered aboriginal families, and providing a range of on-site services such as childcare. Like the specialty Africentric Alternative School, the facility would be open to all students even if its curriculum is “aboriginal-themed.”

The proposal will be discussed at Wednesday’s planning committee meeting and given final approval June 17. The board will then approach the provincial and federal governments for funding, and hopes to open the school’s doors by September 2016.

The discussion comes a week after the release of a landmark Truth and Reconciliation report that detailed the corrosive legacy of Canada’s residential school system and the education barriers that young indigenous Canadians still confront.

Those barriers are also outlined in a new study by the People for Education Annual Report, which stresses the need for Ontario’s entire public school system to better reflect aboriginal history and culture.

Some 82 percent of aboriginal students in Ontario currently attend provincially funded schools. But the report, released Monday, argues that teachers often struggle to incorporate aboriginal content in the classroom.

“I think there is still not a sense that this is all of our history,” said Annie Kidder, executive director of the advocacy group People for Education. “Unless we change how all kids are educated, we’ll perpetuate this gap.”

Priorities should include investing more heavily in teacher training and in ensuring that indigenous culture and history is a visible part of Ontario’s public education from kindergarten on, Kidder added.

Susan Dion agrees, arguing that the TDSB’s new proposal is just one piece of a larger and much-needed effort to make the province’s schools more inclusive. But as a First Nations mother herself, she believes a safe place for aboriginal youth to learn is an important alternative to the status quo.

“We need to have a school where indigenous students can experience a place of belonging.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2015/06/07/tdsb-proposes-k-12-school-that-will-give-first-nations-kids-a-sense-of-belonging.html>

Mirage no more: Inuit university in Nunavut takes shape

How about Inuit Nunanganni University Kanatami? That's "INUK" for short.

JIM BELL, June 09, 2015 - 5:50 am



Participants at a workshop in Iqaluit held this past March to discuss a possible Nunavut-based university pose for a group photo. (PHOTO COURTESY OF SHEENA KENNEDY DALSEG)

It's still a dream — but now an Arctic-based, Inuit-focused university no longer shimmers like a mirage on the edge of an unreachable horizon.

That's because the powers-that-be now believe the dream could one day be made real.

This past June 2, through acting commissioner Nellie Kusugak's throne speech, the Government of Nunavut announced the territorial government will start a feasibility study for a university to be located in Nunavut.

It's too early to tell if the GN is serious or if the study will become a delaying tactic aimed at kicking the can further down the road.

But it's a sign that GN officials have started listening to those who have pushed the idea for years, such as the members of [Nunavut's Ilitturvik University Society](#).

It's also a sign that a [\\$5 million donation](#) the chair of Agnico Eagle Mines promised last year may have sent a jolt of new energy into the discussion.

This past March 18 and March 19, a group of people, mostly educators, academics and public office holders, sat down together at the Francophone Centre in Iqaluit to talk about

creating a roadmap that could one day lead to a university for those who live north of the treeline.

That workshop was private. But the report they produced and released last month is public. Within it, the idea of a new Arctic university has become a little less vague and little more defined.

And though there's still debate over how an Arctic university would work, there's pretty broad agreement on how it should *not* work.

One: participants agree it should not become a pan-territorial university serving the three northern territories, an idea the three territorial premiers have floated in the past.

Two: it should not become a beefed-up version of Nunavut Arctic College, or a "University of Nunavut."

Workshop participants agreed it should become a standalone institution, separate from Arctic College, with its own buildings, infrastructure and governance system.

And what it should become is a university for all the people of Canada's four Inuit regions: an Inuit Nunangat university.

In that spirit, they even came up with a suggested name: Inuit Nunanganni University Kanatami, which forms an easy and convenient acronym: INUK.

Sheena Kennedy Dalseg of Carleton University, co-author of the report and a facilitator for the March workshop, said that was an easy conclusion to reach.

"For some of the stuff, it wasn't even a question. It was just, yeah, that's what we're going to do. And that was one of them," Kennedy Dalseg said.

"It made sense that we would start in Nunavut and then the Government of Nunavut would legislate the university and that people from all over Inuit Nunangat and anybody — it would be open and inclusive to anybody in the world to come — would be welcome," she said.

She also said it was easy for participants to agree on where to put it: in Iqaluit, Canada's largest and most developed Inuit community.

"Maybe down the road, campuses could open up in other regions of Inuit Nunangat, but right now, there's some momentum building in Nunavut, so the idea is, let's start there," Kennedy Dalseg said.

Another big principle won widespread support: independence. An Inuit-focused university should be independent and self-governing, outside the control of government, Inuit organizations and the private sector, workshop participants said.

“Virtually every university in the Western world is based on the idea that it is independent, to promote academic freedom and academic excellence,” Kennedy Dalseg said.

That means new legislation, probably in the form a bill that would be passed by the Nunavut legislature, setting out an arms-length governance structure.

Another way to protect the university’s independence would be a mixed funding model so the institution is not dependent on a single organization.

That would mean a mix of financial contributions from governments, Inuit organizations and the private sector, Kennedy Dalseg said.

But an Inuit Nunangat university would likely give a prominent place to Inuit elders and Inuit knowledge holders, the workshop report said.

And it should also give pride of place to Inuit culture and the Inuit language and strive to become a “decolonizing force.”

To do that, some participants suggested that Inuit elders and knowledge holders be formally recognized and given a protected role, as they are at the Saami University College in Kautokeino, Norway, or at Nunavut’s Akitsiraq law school.

Another way, workshop participants suggested, is to ensure that Inuit language and culture lie within the core of the institution’s academic and research work.

As for what programs an Inuit Nunangat university should offer, participants came up with the following: Inuit studies, fine arts, linguistics, political science, education, health, natural science and law.

“There was also a lot of discussion about how the university could become an international centre for marine biology or cold weather engineering,” Kennedy Dalseg said.

And though the Inuit Nunangat university should start small, participants agreed the institution should one day get a dedicated building, with space for public and private archives, laboratories and other facilities.

“Participants agreed that a university campus could serve as an important hub and connection point for Inuit from around the world,” the report said.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674a_mirage_no_more_an_inuit_university_in_nunavut_takes_shape/

Aboriginal activist claims vindication in \$20,000 ruling against feds



Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society appears on CTV's Canada AM from Ottawa, Thursday, Sept. 5, 2013.

Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press
Published Tuesday, June 9, 2015 4:42AM EDT

OTTAWA - An aboriginal child welfare advocate says she has been vindicated by a recent ruling from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which found a government official “retaliated” against her six years ago.

The tribunal sided with Cindy Blackstock, president of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. It ordered the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to pay Blackstock \$20,000 for pain and suffering and the behaviour of David McArthur, former special assistant to then-minister Chuck Strahl.

McArthur is now chief of staff to Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford

The decision zeroed in on McArthur.

“There is no doubt that the respondent's actions had a wilful and reckless nature,” the ruling said. “Dr. Blackstock was the only individual excluded from the meeting, which supports her contention that she was singled out.”

Blackstock said she plans to donate the money to children's charities.

“I haven't received anything as of yet, and of course, we have to see within 30 days if the federal government is going to appeal it or not.”

In the Commons on Monday, opposition parties asked if the government would apologize to Blackstock.

Mark Strahl, parliamentary secretary to the aboriginal affairs minister and son of Chuck Strahl, said the government is “reviewing the tribunal's decision to determine next steps.”

The dispute centres on a December 2009 meeting at the ministerial headquarters in Gatineau, Que. Blackstock said she was the only person barred from a gathering with the chiefs of Ontario.

“It was shocking and it was embarrassing for me personally,” Blackstock said in an interview. “I cleared all the proper security clearances and everything else and was conducting myself in a professional manner when I was refused access to that meeting. In fact, the chiefs were told if I went in the room, the meeting would not go forward.”

Blackstock is a central figure in a long-standing battle with the federal government over aboriginal child welfare that began before the problematic meeting.

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society opened a human rights complaint in 2007, along with the Assembly of First Nations. Hearings on the issue began six years later.

Blackstock said a ruling could now “come any day.”

“The tribunal will determine if the federal government is racially discriminating against these 163,000 kids,” she said. “And far more importantly, if they are, they will order them to fix it so these kids have a fair chance at growing up in their families.”

In its sweeping recommendations, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian residential schools called on the federal government to enact child welfare legislation that “establishes national standards for aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases.”

The government is reviewing all 94 recommendations issued by the commission last week.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/aboriginal-activist-claims-vindication-in-20-000-ruling-against-feds-1.2413204>

Ontario teachers need more training on aboriginal issues: report

Report shows public school teachers play an important role in delivering information about aboriginal matters

By Liam Casey, The Canadian Press Posted: Jun 09, 2015 7:56 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 09, 2015 10:37 AM ET



Only 29 per cent of elementary schools and 47 per cent of secondary schools offer training on aboriginal issues to teachers, said the report by People for Education, a research and advocacy group. (CBC)

Public school teachers in Ontario are not receiving enough training on aboriginal issues, [according to a new report released Monday](#).

Only 29 per cent of elementary schools and 47 per cent of secondary schools offer training on aboriginal issues to teachers, said the report by People for Education, a research and advocacy group.

Annie Kidder, the group's executive director, has called on the provincial government to implement immediate changes to add more professional development for teachers about issues facing aboriginal people in Canada.



Annie Kidder is the Executive Director and a founder of People for Education. She's calling on the provincial government to implement immediate changes to add more professional development for teachers about issues facing aboriginals in Canada. (peopleforeducation.ca)

It comes one week after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on provincial governments to ensure all students are taught about the history and current plight of First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

The commission's report last week followed a six-year study of Canada's residential schools that concluded the system was a "cultural genocide" that led to the deaths of more than 6,000 children.

"Reconciliation has to happen with everybody," Kidder said. "Education is key to making that happen."

'Ambitious' curriculum

The report shows that 96 per cent of Ontario secondary schools and 92 per cent of elementary schools have aboriginal students.

That means that public school teachers play an important role in delivering information about aboriginal issues, Kidder said.

"There is an ambitious curriculum and an ambitious policy in the province, but when we look at what's actually happening in schools, all kids aren't necessarily getting educated on aboriginal issues all the way from kindergarten through to Grade 12," Kidder said.

"Teachers for the most part say they are not comfortable teaching indigenous culture and issues."

Kidder said there has been improvement in that area, with 69 per cent of secondary schools offering students or staff aboriginal education opportunities, compared to 61 per cent last year.

The majority of elementary schools in the province, however, do not offer any aboriginal education opportunities, according to the report.

The People for Education report is based on survey responses from nearly 1,200 school principals in Ontario.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/ontario-teachers-need-more-training-on-aboriginal-issues-report-1.3105687>

Manitoba children in care not treated as 'human': First Nations advocate



Manitoba Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross speaks regarding the province's pledge to ensure no children in CFS care are housed in hotels on May 28, 2015.

Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press
Published Tuesday, June 9, 2015 12:35PM EDT

WINNIPEG -- Manitoba's new First Nations family advocate says Manitoba doesn't treat children in care and their families as "human."

Cora Morgan, who was appointed by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs last week, said the province's child welfare system is broken. Child and Family Services are taking children into care too quickly and it's virtually impossible for parents to regain custody.

Children in care are being put up in hotels and languishing in jail without a proper support system for families in crisis that would prevent kids from being apprehended in the first place, she said.

"There is a lack of humanity in the way that CFS operates," Morgan told The Canadian Press. "These children in care and these families, I don't see that they're being recognized as human."

"Every single individual needs to feel loved. Where do you find that growing up in a hotel room?"

Manitoba has more than 10,000 children in care and the vast majority are aboriginal. The system has been under scrutiny for years following several high profile deaths and assaults of children in care.

Most recently, Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross tearfully promised to stop using hotels to house kids in care after a young girl was seriously assaulted in March. Both the victim and the youth charged in the assault were in the care of Child and Family Services at a downtown Winnipeg hotel.

The child welfare system came under fire last August when 15-year-old Tina Fontaine was killed after running away from a hotel where she was in government care. Her great-aunt had contacted child welfare when she had difficulty managing the teen. The teen's body was found wrapped in a bag in the Red River.

Many guardians reach out to family services for help, only to have their child taken, Morgan said. Some parents are prepared to do what it takes to get their children back but, they aren't supported by addiction and parenting programs, she added.

Morgan said she has encountered up to six generations of a family who have grown up in care. That cycle must be stopped. The province must involve aboriginal people and support community-based alternatives to apprehension, she said.

"When newcomers first came to this land, they didn't understand us then and they started imposing the creation of reserves and residential schools," Morgan said. "After all these decades, they've created people that they still don't understand because there is so much damage to our identity and our ability to care for our children."

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, said the provincial child welfare system is carrying on the legacy of residential schools. Chiefs created the office of the First Nation family advocate to give aboriginal families a voice in a system that threatens their children and perpetuates the cycle of inter-generational trauma, he said.

"We have to meet the system head on. It's escalating and it's out of control."

Irvin-Ross was unavailable for an interview. Her spokeswoman, Rachel Morgan, said in an emailed statement that the province agrees children belong in loving families in their own communities.

"We have begun moving toward a system of supporting families and supporting communities so that children don't have to be taken into care," she wrote.

"We know there's more to do and we're committed to working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, First Nations leaders and communities to reduce the number of children in care."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/manitoba-children-in-care-not-treated-as-human-first-nations-advocate-1.2413796>

300-year-old blanket worn by First Nations UVic graduate

'I couldn't hold back the tears. It felt like my grandfather was hugging me,' said Joye Walkus

By All Points West, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 09, 2015 4:43 PM PT Last Updated: Jun 09, 2015 5:42 PM PT



Joye Walkus poses with her grandfather's 300-year-old blanket at her graduation ceremony at the University of Victoria on Monday. (Joye Walkus)

A First Nations graduate attended her convocation at the University of Victoria this week wearing a 300-year-old blanket that belonged to her late grandfather, Henry Abel Bell.

Joye Walkus, who graduated with a specialized degree in aboriginal language revitalization, said Bell was the first person to teach her their traditional language.

"I want[ed] my grandfather's memory, spirit, him, to be there ... and this blanket was the biggest representation that I could think of," said Walkus, who is from the Kwakiutl Nation on Vancouver Island.

"The emotion got the better of me when I first tried it on. I couldn't hold back the tears. It felt like my grandfather was hugging me."

The centuries-old blanket had been passed down through her family for generations, but Walkus' grandfather sold it to the [Royal BC Museum](#) 32 years ago.



Henry Abel Bell's sold the 300-year-old blanket to the Royal B.C. Museum 32 years ago, to ensure its preservation. (Joye Walkus)

"He knew the value of it back then and it wasn't going to survive much longer if it stayed in hands that didn't know how to deal with it properly," said Walkus.

"The condition was that if any of his children or grandchildren wanted to borrow the blanket, they were allowed."



Joye Walkus says the blanket was returned to Royal BC Museum after the ceremony. (Joye Walkus)

While Walkus says it was a long process to get permission to wear the blanket, it was something she wanted to do to pay tribute to the person who had such a profound impact on her career path.

"To stand up there with my classmates and to have this honour. This whole thing has been amazing and the university really provided an amazing education for everybody and opened up so many doors."

As Walkus crossed the stage, she says she could feel her grandfather's presence in the room.

"He was there today. His heart would be very proud."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/300-year-old-blanket-worn-by-first-nations-uvic-graduate-1.3106653>

Island educator calls for First Nations Institute

by [Expositor Staff](#) - Jun 10, 2015



An agency that could draft appropriate school curricula

M'CHIGEENG— A week ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which has been examining the legacy of the residential school program for First Nation children, made public its list of recommendations.

These dealt with a wide variety of topics, but there is one that the Commission felt will be fundamental to future generations' understanding of the relationship between Canada's aboriginal population and successive federal governments during Canada's first century. This recommendation calls for making "age appropriate school curricula addressing residential schools, treaties and aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory requirement for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students."

The recommendation is addressed to federal, provincial and territorial governments who are urged to collaborate and consult with First Nation survivors of residential schools and First Nation educators and leaders on the issue.

Education is a provincial jurisdiction, the TRC recognizes, so provinces and territories are urged to "establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister (or higher) level who would be dedicated to aboriginal content in education." A related recommendation suggests that teacher-training programs should include staff whose specific task it would be to instruct potential teachers on how to integrate aboriginal knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

Grace Fox and her husband Joe Fox of M'Chigeeng attended the TRC national event in Ottawa a week ago and were there when Justice Murray Sinclair, chief commissioner, delivered the 94 recommendations the Commission had winnowed from discussions with survivors over the past seven years.



Grace Fox

Ms. Fox has a unique perspective on the issue, in particular as it pertains to the recommendation on educating young Canadians about the past relationship between First Nations peoples and the governments of Canada.

One way or another, she has been involved in education virtually her entire life, up to and including the present.

As a child of six, she was sent to St. Joseph School for Girls at Spanish from her home community of Wikwemikong. Almost all of her elementary and high school education was presented to her there over the next 10 years.

She went to teachers' college, taught elementary school in Espanola, Sudbury and M'Chigeeng and then took special courses to allow her to become a guidance counselor at Manitoulin Secondary School when it opened in 1969.

In the late 1990s, she served as Director of Education for the Wikwemikong Board of Education, and for the past decade Ms. Fox has served as the trustee responsible for First Nation students and their communities on the Rainbow District School Board.

Ms. Fox was re-confirmed in her trustee's role last fall and has done it all in education. Therefore, The Expositor spoke to her following the TRC announcement on how she felt the specific recommendation regarding the mandatory inclusion of aboriginal history throughout publicly funded schools' curricula could or would be carried out and what obstacles this recommendation would have to overcome.

Ms. Fox said, "We're already hearing from educational authorities, 'Where do you expect us to put this into the curriculum?'" The question addresses the practical issue of already crowded curricula as more and more topics are being included at every grade level.

But, having said that, she observed that, “The Ontario government has to take ownership of all that has happened (as do other provinces and territories).”

“The term ‘cultural genocide’ has been named, so it’s now out there, and we have had this great awakening through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process,” Ms. Fox observed. “To put it simply, my concern as a professional educator is the lack of material about and by Native people available to educators.”

She mused that, “It has been a hard battle, and I don’t think it often occurred to us, as teachers, to speak our own ideas on these issues. It was always, ‘the Ministry says...’.”

So now, following Justice Sinclair’s recommendation on the topic, one issue is how, to shift ministries of education (like Ontario’s) so that they include First Nation content in the 12 elementary and secondary instructional years (plus JK and Kindergarten). Another is whether there is the political will to do so.

Ms. Fox noted that the provincial ministries of education own the curriculum they require teachers in their jurisdictions to teach.

“What we need,” she stated, “is a First Nations Institute dedicated to developing Native curriculum. I see the need for that today, for if Native children, and all children, are going to know how these things in the past have affected Canada, then the story must be told methodically and at grade-specific levels.”

She applauded Justice Murray Sinclair’s recommendations and research on this topic. “It was a very powerful day,” she observed. “You think back about your own children and grandchildren not knowing their history or language, and it makes them feel less a part of the country.”

She noted wryly that, “That’s certainly not the way other cultures and nationalities operate in this country.”

We know all about the terrible holocaust in Europe and the Nazis’ hatred for the Jewish population and about the Armenian tragedy a century ago in Turkey, “But the saddest part is that there was a concerted effort, by the Canadian government, to take their culture away from a particular group of children. That’s the hard part, and it’s the most difficult to take in, but it’s a part of our country’s history, and it should be told in schools.”

Ms. Fox and her husband are, indeed, both residential school survivors. “I pride myself for keeping my language,” she says. “Joe and I speak it at home.”

She remembers, though, that she arrived at the girls’ residential school at Spanish as a child of six with no English. “I remember going to confession to tell the priest whatever little sins I had, and I told him in Ojibwe.”

The priest told her, in English, that only a confession in English was valid, implying that God wouldn't hear an Ojibwe language confession.

Ms. Fox said she felt Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde "got it right" when he stated last week that getting rid of racist attitudes would be an excellent first step towards national reconciliation.

She quoted his statement where he said, "I urge everybody across Canada to rid themselves of things like the misconceptions about indigenous peoples, the discriminatory, racist attitudes that may exist, to move them out so that new things may come in."

"I noticed," she observed, "that when we were in Ottawa last week, and maybe because it was because the Truth and Reconciliation Commission announcements and rally were going on and were in the news, but there seemed to be a different attitude, as Chief Bellegarde had asked for."

She said she is aware of what the grand chief was alluding to and the different attitudes she sensed in Ottawa because "even in my role as a First Nations trustee, representing First Nations students, some people (not other trustees) give me the impression that they think my role is a lesser one. I'm appointed (not elected), and I represent the Native children."

- See more at: <http://www.manitoulin.ca/2015/06/10/island-educator-calls-for-first-nations-institute/#sthash.KGUbNZwd.dpuf>

NDP fund education, nix ministerial approval

Christina Martens/ Wetaskiwin Times

Wednesday, June 10, 2015 10:51:23 MDT AM

The NDP government's decision to restore education funding for 2015-16 averted a disastrous situation for St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic school district and has Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools breathing a little easier.

"I think it is wonderful news," said STAR board chair John Tomkinson. "The budget reflects the needs of the students and the community."

Late last month, Premier Rachel Notley announced her government would restore \$103 million in enrolment growth funding and maintain funding to cover the costs associated with the previously negotiated Teacher Agreement.

"By funding enrolment growth and restoring funding for transportation, inclusive education, First Nations, Metis and Inuit among other areas, we are helping to ensure that school

authorities can make decisions that are in the best interest of the students in their communities,” said Minister of Education David Eggen.

“It’s not additional funding but it’s not less funding,” said Tomkinson, “It puts us back to equal funding distribution on a per pupil basis.”

When the previous provincial government announced reductions to education, STAR was among the school districts that would have been hit hard, said Tomkinson, explaining they would have had 5,000 students but received funding for only 3,500 of them, which would have meant cuts to the First Nations, Métis and Inuit program, transportation, student services and administration budgets.

With a new school being constructed in Leduc, under the previous funding situation that school would not have been staffed to accommodate the 600 students expected to attend.

“If the freeze would have gone forward, it would have been catastrophic for the division,” he said. “Funding must always be done on a per student basis.”

With the funding restoration, Tomkinson said “this allows for the continuation of many services we’ve offered for years.”

WRPS board chair Deanna Specht is also happy with the announcement, even though it doesn’t impact WRPS as significantly because there is no growth predicted in the public school district.

“Putting money back in the budget is always good,” she said. “Our enrollment has not increased so it’s not an issue for us but they have fully restored the reduction in grants that had been taken off and the Teacher Agreement will be covered.”

WRPS is still projecting a deficit and while school district staff is still putting together the 2015-16 budget because the Provincial Government also extended the deadline for school district budgets to June 30 WRPS staff are anticipating it will be less than was originally predicted as several teachers have taken advantage of a one-time early retirement incentive offered by WRPS and staff have been directed to conduct an efficiency study to see where improvements can be made without closing schools.

The revamped budget will be presented to the WRPS board at their regular meeting June 23.

“This government firmly believes that Alberta’s students deserve the best education we can deliver and, by restoring funding for kindergarten to Grade 12 students, we are taking swift action to making this vision a reality,” said Notley.

Ministerial approval for funding no longer necessary

Putting decision making back into the hands of elected school officials is a positive step by the newly-elected Provincial Government, say the chairs of both the public and separate school districts in this area.

When the Progressive Conservative government announced its 2015 budget in March, Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools projected a \$3.87 million deficit for the 2015-16 school year. The problem was magnified by the fact boards were told they could not access reserves without Ministerial approval, but they had to submit balanced budgets.

Under the NDP government, boards can now use reserves at their discretion.

“The biggest thing has been lifting on the reserves so we don’t need Ministerial approval,” said Specht. “We’re still projecting a deficit from last year but we’ll be able to lessen the blow by being able to use of our reserves now.”

Reserves are money ear-marked for a specific item. It is not a surplus and there are times, said Specht, when money that has been set aside for one thing needs to be moved to something else. Decisions to reallocate funds are not taken lightly by WRPS's elected officials, she said, and should never have been required to get Ministerial Approval for.

"It's a necessity. (Removing the Ministerial Approval) is a great thing. It should never have been put in in the first place."

Tomkinson said the government's decision to put reserve use back into the hands of locally-elected officials "restores democracy".

"We are locally-elected and accountable. We make decisions on our budget on a strategic basis with a long-term vision to meeting the needs of the community," he said.

The NDP government's decision to remove the requirement for Ministerial approval is a step toward repairing relationships between school boards and the provincial government.

"They're saying they believe, like we do, education is critically important to the province. The voice of the people carries weight," said Tomkinson, noting in a discussion he had with Minister of Education David Eggen last week, the new government wants to develop relationships with other levels of government to provide for the educational needs of Alberta's students.

"Now is the time to end antagonism in education," said Tomkinson, noting Eggen's vision for Alberta includes support for funding and transparency in government and in capital funding.

"That's a wonderful thing so far," said Tomkinson. "This would be welcome by teachers, administration, staff and boards to work constructively."

Direct Link: <http://www.wetaskiwinetimes.com/2015/06/10/ndp-fund-education-nix-ministerial-approval>

Prince Rupert students must learn indigenous language from September

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 4 will learn Sm'algyax, language of the Tsimshian First Nation

By Daybreak North, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 11, 2015 6:27 AM PT Last Updated: Jun 11, 2015 6:44 AM PT



This is one of the Prince Rupert schools where children will be required to learn some of the language of the Tsimshian First Nation. (Google Streetview)

Starting in September, all Prince Rupert, B.C., students enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 4 will be required to learn Sm'algyax, the language of the Tsimshian First Nation.

The language program has been available at two of the district's schools for the past decade, but it will now expand to every primary classroom in the city.

Roberta Edzerza, the Aboriginal Education Principal for School District 52, says the program is designed to teach small, simple aspects of the language that can be used in song, activities and outdoor learning.

"We are on traditional Tsimshian territory and the Sm'algyax is the language of the territory," she told Carolina de Ryk on CBC Radio One's *Daybreak North*.

"We are so proud and we would like to share our language and culture with everybody."

While learning a second language has been shown to be beneficial to the developing brain, Edzerza adds that this particular program can act as a bridge between cultural communities.

"It's one avenue to address racism. Education is key. Learning the language and sharing in the learning and the culture," she said.

"Our students are really proud and they look forward to learning the language."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/prince-rupert-students-must-learn-indigenous-language-from-september-1.3108193>

Aboriginal Health

Arctic berries may hold key to diabetes prevention for Inuit: new research

Circumpolar health experts seek ways to manage and prevent diabetes in the Arctic

JANE GEORGE, June 08, 2015 - 10:50 am



The Arctic aqpiq may hold the secret to diabetes prevention or even reduction, new research from Laval university suggests. (FILE PHOTO)

OULU, FINLAND — Worried about diabetes? You might just want to get yourself a bowl of aqpiqs (cloudberries) or some other local Arctic berries.

That's because research by Laval university's health expert André Marette suggests that Arctic aqpiqs, among others, increase healthy microbes in your intestines and can prevent or even diminish the symptoms of diabetes.

If this surprises you, Marette said the main medicine used to fight Type 2 diabetes is actually derived from lilacs.

What if Arctic berries, which proved their potency in Marette's studies on mice reverse or prevent diabetes among Inuit?

A "good-sized portion" of berries a day could be all you need, Marette said, adding that Laval hopes to get funding for a \$100-million project called Sentinel North, which would look at the relationship between human health and nature in the Arctic.

And the more local the berries are, the better they are, Marette told a group of doctors and medical researchers meeting in the Arctic Finnish city of Oulu June 8 before the 16th [International Congress on Circumpolar Health](#) gets underway there June 9.

The group's goal: to start an Inuit-specific diabetes network, stretching from Alaska to Greenland, which would enable the sharing of knowledge on diabetes and become an essential tool to fight "an evolving epidemic."

Inuit know diabetes as "timi siuraujaartuqaluartuq" or "sukaqaluartuq," which means "too much sugar within the body."

Diabetes develops when the body can't process sugars properly, leading to high levels of sugar in the blood. Diabetes can lead to heart attacks, nerve damage, kidney disease and blindness.

Diabetes rates are now generally low among Canadian Inuit and the most recent statistics show that less than three in 100 Nunavummiut have diabetes.

But the recorded number of Greenlanders with diabetes has grown with better screening. Health Canada also predicts that diabetes will increase in Canada's Arctic regions.

An Inuit diabetes network could be a first step in understanding whether it's the Arctic diet or genetics that protects Inuit from diabetes — or at least when people remain active and eat a low-carbohydrate, traditional diet.

Genetic studies show that Inuit in Alaska, Nunavik and Greenland share a genetic link that keeps higher blood sugar overall. This would be helpful if you had to go without food for a while.

But now, when people eat starchy, sweet store-bought food, that same advantage can create problems, because blood sugar levels spike sharply, as in diabetes, presenters in Oulu said.

Greenland and Alaska sent top medical officers to the discussion on establishing the diabetes network, while key Nunavik researchers were also present.

Health Minister Paul Okalik and other Nunavut government staff are representing Nunavut, but did not attend the meeting.

But Dr. Pamela Orr, an internist who visits Baker Lake, said diabetes in Nunavut is “big.”

As well, a woman who had previously worked in health in Nunavut told those at the discussion that she feels diabetes is not on the top of the list of the GN or even of people in the communities, who may have more pressing issues, such as suicide or accidental death, to deal with.

They suggested the network also include a focus on the Canadian Arctic's nutrition crisis and the health of children.

And they mentioned how many Nunavut children are [obese, malnourished and at higher risk of diabetes](#), all at the same time.

Efforts at more discussion on good nutrition and food security could help some deal with the trauma of past periods of starvation and understand that today, having a fat child isn't a prevention against diabetes or being malnourished.

Other groups meeting before the start of the health congress, which last took place three years ago in Fairbanks, Alaska, looked June 8 at how to tackle tuberculosis and other infectious diseases around the circumpolar world.

When the meeting gets underway June 9, some 200 participants will discuss topics that will include indigenous health, contaminants, mental health, accidents and injuries, women's health.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre and researchers who have worked in Arctic Canada are among those scheduled to make presentations.

For more from the conference look later on Nunatsiaqonline.ca.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674arctic_berries_may_hold_key_to_diabetes_prevention_among_inuit_new_res/

Nunavik Inuit health study from 2004 continues to churn out info

Recent study points to link between marijuana use and reduced risk of diabetes

JANE GEORGE, June 10, 2015 - 1:10 pm



Research from Laval university points to an association between marijuana smoking and diabetes prevention. (FILE PHOTO)

OULU, FINLAND — Results from the [2004 Qanuippitaa \(How are we?\) health survey](#) of Inuit in Nunavik continue to surface, even across the Atlantic Ocean, at the International Congress on Circumpolar Health now underway in Oulu, Finland.

Among the latest research results from the 2004 study: if you're an Inuk from Nunavik and smoke marijuana, you may be at less risk of developing diabetes because you'll have less body fat.

The research came out of a voluntary survey on drug use, filled out by 786 respondents in the larger 2004 Inuit health survey, which found that 57 per cent or nearly six in 10 people surveyed had used marijuana during the previous year.

Using results from the marijuana-use survey and physical exams, researchers from Laval university have now determined that the weed-smoking Nunavimmiut had a lower body mass index, which measures body fat based on height and weight.

Participants' blood samples also had a lower fasting insulin level. This shows how well insulin helps your body digest sugar, important in preventing Type 2 diabetes.

Information on the association between smoking marijuana and reduced obesity was [discussed earlier this year](#) in *Nunatsiaq News*.

But by far the strongest association found by the research on “Cannabis use and insulin resistance in the Inuit population” was that, if you do smoke marijuana, there will be even more of an impact on your weight when you’ve never been a smoker or if you are a former smoker, researcher Michel Lucas said June 10 at the Oulu conference.

Overall, the participants in the 2004 survey had high obesity rates, very high tobacco use and a sedentary lifestyle, but they also had diabetes rates slightly lower than the rest of Canada, which is why the Laval researchers started to look at other variables.

The health study information on drug use showed that the total effect of past-year cannabis use on insulin was “significant,” Lucas said: body mass was always lower, fat mass was lower, and the fasting insulin level (taken when you haven’t eaten) was lower.

Past-year marijuana use was associated with 0.56 lower likelihood of obesity, the researchers found.

However, it looks as if the association between diabetes and marijuana-smoking was due to the lower fat of the weed-smokers, so marijuana is not “a magic bullet,” Lucas said.

The weight-control association could be due to the energy it takes someone to smoke, because marijuana increases the heart rate even more than smoking tobacco does.

The Laval researchers aren’t sure if their findings would hold true for other groups of people, because Inuit may have “a particular metabolic profile or reaction to cannabis that may limit the generalizability of our results.”

Among the other information from the 2004 health study in Nunavik, as well as from earlier studies in the region from 1992: the lowering of contaminant levels in people’s blood due to [global restrictions on pollutants and dietary advisories](#).

Those at the conference also heard June 10 from Finnish health expert Marjo-Riita Järvelin about the usefulness of these large population health studies, which she has been involved in.

Results from follow-ups on studies done in northern Finland in 1967 and 1986 continue to provide a vast amount of information to doctors and policy makers, she said.

The surveys have highlighted the associations between risk elements like smoking, bad housing, unemployment, age of a baby's mother and whether a pregnancy is wanted, low birth weight, childhood obesity, health and mental health right into adulthood. These have been used to change policy — and also, over the long-term, have helped cut health care costs, Järvelin said.

Plans are currently underway for a [2016 edition of the Nunavik Inuit health survey](#) to provide updated baseline information on the health of Nunavimmiut.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik_inuit_health_study_from_2004_continues_to_churn_out_info/

Aboriginal History

Canada's First Nations push back against centuries of murder, abuse and neglect

By

[Doreen Nicoll](#)

| June 10, 2015



Victors write the history books. They write versions that are often coloured by their perceptions and the image they want to portray. They hope that time will erase any trace of wrongdoing or injustices imposed on others. But, they forget that memories are long and passed from generation to generation. They forget that some bystanders will not be silenced or stopped until justice is served.

After reading recent editorials by [Betty L. Reade](#) and [Richard Gwyn](#) it's time Canadian history books were rewritten and the disturbing truth laid bare.

In June 1749, Governor Edward Cornwallis establish Halifax thereby violating earlier treaties with the Mi'kmaq (1726). When Mi'kmaq fought against this expansion the British constructed more settlements and forts. On October 2, 1749, Cornwallis placed a bounty on the head of every Mi'kmaq man, woman and child. Ten guineas, the equivalent of \$19 today, was paid for each scalp. Cornwallis meant to eradicate the Mi'kmaq.

To date this law has never been repealed.

The Indian Act passed by Canada's Parliament in 1874 effectively imprisoned Aboriginals on reserve lands making them legal wards of the state.

Proof of genocide exists in the form of letters documenting the distribution of small pox infected blankets by the British to Aboriginals during the battle of Fort Pitt, Saskatchewan in 1885.

In 1884 Ottawa passed legislation creating state-funded, church administered Indian Residential Schools. In 1920 the federal government mandated that Aboriginal children must attend residential schools from age seven to fifteen.

In 1928 the Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in Alberta. Anyone attending a native residential school could be sterilized upon the approval of the school Principal. At least 3,500 women were sterilized under this law.

In 1933, British Columbia passed the same Sexual Sterilization Act. The United Church established sterilization centres in Bella Bella and Nanaimo. Thousands of native men and women were sterilized until the 1980s.

That same year, residential school principals were made the legal guardians of all native students. This law required Indigenous parents to surrender custody or face imprisonment.

The federal government attempted to close all residential schools in 1938, but gave in to pressure from Catholic and Protestant church leaders.

From 1946 until the 1970s a Central Intelligence Agency used students from Canadian residential schools as involuntary test subjects with the consent of the churches.

During the 1940s and 50s, Health Canada used children from residential schools in medical experiments.

Even after the last residential school closed our institutions failed to protect Indigenous children, youth, and women.

B.C. [judge David Ramsay](#) pleaded guilty on May 3, 2004, to sexual assault causing bodily harm, breach of trust and three counts of buying sex from a person under 18. The offences took place between 1992 and 2001.

His victims, mostly Aboriginal girls living in poverty and in trouble with the law, were subjected to acts of escalating sexual violence. Some were as young as 12 years old.

In June 2004, Ramsay was sentenced to seven years in jail. He died January 19, 2008.

In 2015 an [RCMP officer](#) in northern Manitoba arrested an intoxicated Indigenous woman at a house party only to return, off duty, to request her release into his custody so that he could, "pursue a personal relationship."

In Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, an [RCMP constable](#) took a complaint from a woman who was choked, beaten, stripped, and pushed out of a house naked by her boyfriend. The constable failed to interview witnesses and refused to lay charges as per RCMP policy on domestic violence, which states, in part, "A charge will be laid when reasonable and probable grounds exist, irrespective of the willingness of the victim to give evidence."

Respected international and national groups are demanding a national inquiry into Canada's 1,181 missing and murdered Indigenous women. This process must be followed with the timely implementation of recommendations.

The International Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on December 9, 1948 set the United Nations [definition of genocide](#) as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group:

- (a) Killing members of the group
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

Using this check list, Canada is five for five.

Yes, the terms cultural genocide and genocide need to be used when referring to Canada's treatment of Indigenous people because Canada has clearly established a history of persistent attempts at eradicating our Indigenous populations.

As Mr. Gwyn pointed out, "a huge increase is taking place in the number of university-educated Aboriginal [people]." This is testimony to the fact that Canada's Indigenous people are able to embrace education as well as cultural traditions and native languages.

Thank goodness they were, and are, strong enough to fight for their rights without giving in to learned hopelessness.

Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/doreen-nicoll/2015/06/canadas-first-nations-push-back-against-centuries-murder-abuse->

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Canada should replace colonial place names with Indigenous ones

Once a tool for colonialism, place names can now be a tool for reconciliation.



A map shows part of Haida Gwaii, formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands, which were renamed under British Columbia's 2010 Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act.

By: Tim Wood Published on Mon Jun 08 2015

A preoccupation with toponymy, or place names, may seem trivial or irrelevant in light of [last week's report](#) by the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But in some ways, and in many places, the map of contemporary Canada reflects the “cultural genocide” perpetrated against aboriginal peoples. The renaming of prominent geographical features has the potential to acknowledge Indigenous history, celebrate Aboriginal resilience and help turn the page on Canada's dark colonial past.

A prime example is the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, which includes some of the world's largest islands. Maps of Northern Canada depict islands named Victoria, Prince

Patrick, and King William (for English royals); Baffin, Bathurst and Melville (for English bureaucrats); Devon, Southampton and Ellesmere (for English places). Ellef Ringnes and Axel Heiberg stand out only for the fact that these islands are named, bizarrely, for Norwegian brewers.

What no official map shows is the names given to these majestic places by the Inuit who spend all or part of their lives there — and who have done so since long before the land was explored or claimed, in all its vastness, by European states. To speakers of Inuktitut, for example, Victoria Island is Kitlineq, Baffin Island is Qikiqtaaluk and Devon Island is Tatlutit.

The latter names have contextual meaning and resonance. They inspire and they evoke. Their supplanting by the mundane toponymy of 19th-century European explorers and royals is, at best, arrogant and insensitive. At worst, such place names are part and parcel of the historical “policy to eliminate Aboriginal people as distinct peoples,” as impugned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Toponymy was not an explicit focus of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, although its report does call for adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 13 of that declaration enshrines the right of Indigenous peoples “to designate and retain their own names for communities [and] places.”

Place names have contributed to past efforts at reconciliation with Aboriginals in Canada and beyond (to say nothing of forging distinctive, post-colonial national identities more generally). The Queen Charlotte Islands were renamed Haida Gwaii under British Columbia’s 2010 Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act, while Nunavut’s Ellesmere Island National Park officially became Quttinirpaaq National Park in 1999. The famous red outcropping in Australia’s Outback, previously known as Ayers Rock National Park, was formally designated Uluru National Park in 1995.

As one (admittedly small) part of a much larger process of reconciliation, these examples offer a compelling model for Natural Resources Canada and the Geographical Names Board, in consultation with the provinces, territories and — most importantly — the aboriginal peoples concerned. Undoubtedly “words are not enough,” as stated by Justice Murray Sinclair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in addressing the appalling mistreatment of Indigenous persons and peoples. But the symbolism of names, and of place names in particular, should not be underestimated.

Tim Wood practices international law in Paris. He graduated from McGill’s Faculty of Law and was legislative assistant to the Hon. Irwin Cotler MP.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/06/08/canada-should-replace-colonial-place-names-with-indigenous-ones.html>

Aboriginal Politics

Aboriginal Affairs spending shortfall amounts to \$1B, internal document says

5-year federal analysis of 'lapsed' spending lists top underspending departments

By Dean Beeby, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 05, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 05, 2015 11:26 AM ET



Justice Murray Sinclair, centre, and fellow Truth and Reconciliation commissioners Marie Wilson, right, and Wilton Littlechild discuss their report on Canada's residential school system in Ottawa this week. The report called for more resources for First Nations, even as an internal report suggests Aboriginal Affairs is holding back promised money. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

The department that delivers programs for Canada's indigenous people has held back more than \$1 billion in promised spending for social services over the last five years.

That significant level of so-called lapsed spending — money promised but never spent — places Aboriginal Affairs among the largest "serial" offenders, that is, key departments that regularly spend less than budgeted in big dollar amounts year after year.

The other "serial" lapsers in a top-seven list compiled by the Privy Council Office failed to spend all their budgeted money for infrastructure and procurement, including National Defence, while Aboriginal Affairs stands out as the only social-service department regularly falling so short of budget.



Advocate Cindy Blackstock has launched a legal challenge, saying First Nation children are not getting their fair share of federal support for education and social services. (CBC)

A heavily censored analysis of lapsing behaviour was obtained by CBC News from the Privy Council Office, the prime minister's department, under the Access to Information Act.

Other social-service departments have made headlines in recent months for significant dollar shortfalls in promised spending, including Veterans Affairs, which has underspent by \$1 billion over a decade and Employment and Social Development Canada, which lapsed almost \$100 million in 2013-14 alone.

But only Aboriginal Affairs — with a budget of about \$8 billion, not all of it discretionary — made the internal list, created Nov. 28 for Privy Council Clerk Janice Charette.

Trend of higher lapses

The Parliamentary Budget Office and others say some lapsed spending is to be expected each year, as programs are delayed, procurement hits snags and construction timelines lengthen. But the internal analysis for Charette says there has been "a trend of higher lapses in recent years," and calls underspending at the top seven departments "significant in magnitude."

In 2012-13, as the government's sweeping deficit-reduction cuts began to bite, total lapsed money hit a record \$10 billion for all departments and agencies, or more than one of every 10 dollars budgeted, the analysis found.

Budgeted dollars not spent are 'significant in magnitude.'— *Internal report for Janice Charette, clerk of the Privy Council*

Before the Conservatives formed government in 2006, annual lapsed spending was steady at about five per cent, but it began to increase sharply in the years following, spiking at

more than 10 per cent in 2012-13, the total fell to 7.7 per cent in 2013-14. (The most recent number, for 2014-15, will be reported in the Public Accounts in the fall.)

The calculation excludes federal spending on mandatory programs, such as transfers to the provinces, and includes discretionary spending voted on each year by Parliament.

The analysis says Veterans Affairs is an average lapser, with about five per cent of its budget unspent in recent years, which therefore "demonstrates prudent financial planning" by that department.

The king of the lapsers is Infrastructure Canada, with an average of \$1.5 billion unspent each year. The heavily censored document contains an explanation that is mostly blacked out.

Aboriginal Affairs underspends by an average of \$218 million each year.

'Timing issues' cited

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs took issue with the Privy Council Office analysis, saying most of the lapsed funds are "carried forward" to be used in coming years.

"From 2009-10 until 2013-14, 97.2 per cent of what was marked as lapsed funding in the public accounts has actually been carried forward to future years and spent on a wide range of programs," Valerie Hache said in an email, which did not include any accounting of the rollovers.

"The reprofiling is simply due to timing issues that are common in complex negotiations where a number of parties are involved."

The Privy Council Office analysis concludes that in future years "the existence of a lapse in the five per cent range is likely to persist" across all of government. "Such a result should not be perceived as problematic."

New Democrat MP Niki Ashton, aboriginal affairs critic, said the repeated underspending of millions of dollars is "unconscionable," given the appalling living conditions on reserves today.

"This government chose, in silence, to re-pocket it instead of spending it on people who not just need it but people for whom they have a fiduciary obligation," she said in an interview.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission this week called for significantly more resources to help First Nations survivors of residential schools recover from generations of horrific physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse at the hands of church and government workers, damaging virtually every indigenous family in Canada. No concrete commitments have been made.

The planned budget for Aboriginal Affairs is to shrink by a billion dollars by 2017-18 from current levels, to \$7 billion, according to the department's fiscal blueprint tabled earlier in the spring.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/aboriginal-affairs-spending-shortfall-amounts-to-1b-internal-document-says-1.3100937>

Aboriginal Affairs spending shortfall 'unforgivable,' say Stó:lō, Gitsegukla First Nations

'I'm lost for words,' says Gitsegukla First Nation Councilor Willie Blackwater

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 05, 2015 10:04 AM PT Last Updated: Jun 05, 2015 10:46 AM PT



Stó:lō Tribal Council advisor Ernie Crey says the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' spending shortfall is "unforgivable." (CBC)

Local First Nations leaders are appalled by the news that the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs did not spend \$1 billion of its budget.

Documents obtained by the CBC show the Department of Aboriginal Affairs spent \$200 million below its budget each year in the last five years.

The news comes just days after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [released its findings](#).

Willie Blackwater, a band councilor with the Gitsegukla First Nation, says he was devastated to hear the news.

"When you hear there are billions of dollars out there that could have been used to address what we need all in one year, I don't know...I'm lost for words," says Blackwater.

Blackwater says 90 per cent of his his Northern B.C. community is on social assistance and they're in dire need of funds for social development and housing.

Ernie Crey, an advisor to the Stó:lō Tribal Council, says he's not surprised. He says the federal government has lost its moral compass.

"To withhold funds from communities that heavily rely on them to offer important services and programming for their community members, it's just unforgivable," said Crey.

The Ministry of Aboriginal affairs says the delay in spending the funds is common and that it often involves negotiations with other parties.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/aboriginal-affairs-spending-shortfall-unforgivable-say-st%C3%B3-l%C5%8D-gitsegukla-first-nations-1.3102141>

Federal government appoints special representative to negotiate with the Manitoba Métis

By: [Mia Rabson](#)

Posted: 06/4/2015 3:05 PM | [Comments:](#)

OTTAWA — The federal government has appointed a special representative to work with the Métis on implementing a more than two-year-old Supreme Court decision on Metis rights.

"This is the first breakthrough for us in over two years," said Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand.



The federal government is moving forward with finding a settlement with the Manitoba Metis Federation.



MMF president David Chartrand.

In March 2013, the Supreme Court ruled the government had not lived up to its duty in the Manitoba Act of 1870 to set aside 1.4 million acres of land for Métis children. The high court disagreed with both a Manitoba court and the Manitoba Court of Appeal, which had dismissed the MMF land claim. The court case began in 1981 and took more than three decades to resolve.

At the time of the ruling Chartrand said he was waiting by the phone for a discussion with Prime Minister Stephen Harper and for negotiations to begin in earnest. It never happened.

Instead Chartrand says the government kept telling them the court didn't give any direction about what the federal government was supposed to do.

He says that has now changed, and the special representative will be working with the MMF to map out how to negotiate a settlement for that claim.

The MMF is expecting a multi-million dollar deal from the ruling. The land in question has long been sold off and makes up much of modern day Winnipeg. The MMF is looking for cash settlements and land from other crown parcels.

The MMF tried to negotiate with the federal government but ultimately ended up in court asking for a declaration the Crown had not lived up to its fiduciary responsibility when it doled out the land promised to more than 7,000 Metis children between 1870 and 1885.

The land was promised in Section 31 of the Manitoba Act of 1870, in return for Red River settlers agreeing to become part of Canada. Métis leader Louis Riel led the negotiations.

The Supreme Court found the purpose of section 31 was to "give the Métis a head start in the race for land and a place in the new province. This required that the grants be made while a head start was still possible." However, by the time the land was doled out, settlers had taken most of the best land.

It took more than 10 years for the Crown to make the allotments of land, and 15 years for the Métis children who did not receive land to receive money instead. The money was based on 1879 land prices, which by 1885, could not buy nearly the same amount of land as the children would have received.

In 2013 the government said it was reviewing the ruling. Today's appointment of a special minister's representative, made by Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, is the first real movement on the file since the ruling.

Chartrand called it "a massive break through."

"What you see here, this will one day lead to a settlement," he said.

The representative is also assigned to work with Métis organizations to figure out a way forward on another court ruling that will address who is in fact Métis.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Federal-government-appoints-special-representative-to-negotiate-with-the-Manitoba-Metis-306182901.html>

Aboriginal Affairs “retaliated” against First Nations child advocate over human rights complaint: Tribunal

[National News](#) | June 6, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#)



Jorge Barrera
APTN National News

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal awarded a First Nations child advocate \$20,000 after determining an official in the office of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs “retaliated” against her over a human rights complaint against the department.

The tribunal released its decision in the case of Cindy Blackstock on Friday.

Blackstock is the president of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society which, along with the Assembly of First Nations, launched a human rights complaint in 2007 alleging the federal Aboriginal Affairs department discriminates against First Nations children on the basis of race and national ethnic origin by underfunding child-welfare services on reserves.

Blackstock added the retaliation complaint to the original discrimination complaint on Dec. 22, 2009. The tribunal has not yet ruled on the discrimination complaint.

The tribunal ruled that Aboriginal Affairs should pay \$10,000 to Blackstock for pain and suffering and \$10,000 for the “wilful and reckless conduct” of David McArthur, the senior special assistant to Chuck Strahl, who was the minister of Aboriginal Affairs at the time.

McArthur is currently chief of staff to Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford.

McArthur blocked Blackstock from entering a meeting on Dec. 9, 2009, at the Aboriginal Affairs department building in Gatineau, Que., because she had filed a human rights complaint against the department, the tribunal found.

“There is no doubt that the respondent’s actions had a wilful and reckless nature. Dr. Blackstock was the only individual excluded from the meeting, which supports her contention that she was singled out,” said the tribunal. “Not only did Mr. McArthur admit

that he was aware of the complaint, but he expressed that he was afraid that it would be discussed during the meeting...His testimony revealed a desire to exclude her because she had a filed a human rights complaint and a disregard for the rights protected in the Act.”

Blackstock was asked to be part of the hastily arranged Chiefs of Ontario meeting to discuss child welfare policy and funding by Allied Iroquois and Allied Indians Grand Chief Randall Phillips to act as a technical aide.

The group of 10 to 14 people went through security, up the elevator to minister’s office floor for the meeting with McArthur. As the group filed into the meeting room, McArthur stopped Blackstock at the door and asked her identify herself. When she did, McArthur blocked the door and told her, “We’ll see you at another time....”

When Phillips tried to intervene, McArthur told him it was either Blackstock or the meeting.

Blackstock was told to sit and wait outside the door. A building security guard stood nearby, keeping an eye on her. She waited for about 15 minutes before leaving.

During his testimony, McArthur said Blackstock wasn’t on the list of invitees. Tribunal testimony revealed, however, that most of the people in the meeting weren’t on any list.

“McArthur testified that he only learned of Dr. Blackstock’s planned attendance shortly before the meeting and that, while he was aware of the Complaint, his reason for excluding her was because he needed to be properly briefed before meeting with someone of Dr. Blackstock’s stature,” said the tribunal ruling. “Mr. McArthur expressed that he was concerned that a wide range of other issues, including the (human rights) complaint, could arise during the meeting and that he was not in a position to address them at this time.”

The tribunal found that the posting of the guard by the waiting area while Blackstock sat outside the meeting stemmed from a security incident triggered by the Chiefs of Ontario delegation.

Blackstock said she filed the complaint to help protect the rights of the public from facing retaliation from the government over human rights complaints.

“This ruling is a black mark on Canada’s human rights record and Parliament should respond by taking strong measure to protect the public from government retaliation,” said Blackstock, in a statement.

The tribunal, however, ruled against Blackstock on four other allegations in her retaliation complaint.

Blackstock alleged that she faced retaliation from the department in 2008 after she was passed-over on a job to be part of a British Columbia working group on reforming First Nations child welfare in the province. Blackstock also alleged the department retaliated against her by spying on her public appearances and Facebook activities along with accessing her Indian status file.

The tribunal found that the federal department's manager of the child and family welfare program in the B.C. region had grounds to reject Blackstock's candidacy. Blackstock had been openly critical of the Alberta model the working group wanted to use as a basis for reform in B.C. Blackstock's name was put forward by Mary Teegee, with the Carrier Sekani Family Services.

The tribunal determined the separate allegations that department officials spied on her public appearances and kept track of her Facebook postings in retaliation for the human rights complaint also weren't founded. The tribunal says both those activities were related to the ongoing litigation.

The tribunal also found that Blackstock's Indian status record was accessed twice to deal with her requests under the Access to Information and Privacy Act and not as the result of retaliation.

Blackstock's spying and Indian status record allegations were also the subject of a Privacy Commissioner's ruling. [More information can be found here.](#)

Aboriginal Affairs can appeal the ruling before the Federal Court.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/06/06/aboriginal-affairs-retaliated-first-nations-child-advocate-human-rights-complaint-tribunal/>

Perry Bellegarde, national chief, calls on government to meet obligations to First Nations

'We still have boil-water advisories, we still have huge housing needs,' says Assembly of First Nations head

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 06, 2015 1:08 PM ET Last Updated: Jun 06, 2015 2:35 PM ET



Assembly of First Nations national Chief Perry Bellegarde says the federal government needs to honour its financial obligations to First Nations people. (The Canadian Press)

"I think it shows that the Crown is failing to meet its fiduciary obligations to First Nations people, and basically, fundamental human rights needs are not being met," Perry Bellegarde told CBC on Saturday.

"We still have boil-water advisories, we still have huge housing needs, and so if the money was there it should be allocated and spent...to close the gap that exists."

A heavily-censored analysis of the department's funds and allocations was obtained by CBC from the Privy Council Office, the prime minister's department, under the Access to Information Act.

It shows that the department delivering programs for Canada's indigenous people has held back more than \$1 billion in promised spending for social services over the last five years.

That significant level of so-called lapsed spending — money promised but never spent — places Aboriginal Affairs among the largest serial offenders, that is, key departments that regularly spend less than budgeted in big dollar amounts year after year.

'If we can close [the gap], that's going to be good for this entire country'

Bellegarde said Saturday that the government should focus on improving the quality of life on the country's reserves.

"The overall message I think we have to get out to not only to [Aboriginal] Affairs, but to Canadians in general, is that there's got to be greater investments in education and training and housing and water, and in focusing on the youth, because there's a high social gap that exists in Canada," he said.

"But to have a billion dollars lapse, that's not acceptable. They've got Crown, fiduciary ... treaty obligations. They've got to honour them and meet them. It's just really disheartening to hear that a billion dollars has been lapsed," said Bellegarde. "It's not

acceptable....There's a huge social cost to that gap, and that's not good for this country, it's not good for our people. So if we can close it, that's going to be good for this entire country."

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs said most of the lapsed funds are "carried forward" to be used in coming years.

"From 2009-10 until 2013-14, 97.2 per cent of what was marked as lapsed funding in the public accounts has actually been carried forward to future years and spent on a wide range of programs," Valerie Hache said in an email, which did not include any accounting of the rollovers.

"The reprofiling is simply due to timing issues that are common in complex negotiations where a number of parties are involved."

The planned budget for Aboriginal Affairs is to shrink by \$1 billion by 2017-18 from current levels, to \$7 billion, according to the department's fiscal blueprint tabled earlier in the spring.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/perry-bellegarde-national-chief-calls-on-government-to-meet-obligations-to-first-nations-1.3103299>

Stephen Maher: Harper has become positively sphinxlike staying silent on Truth and Reconciliation

[Stephen Maher](#) | June 5, 2015 5:10 PM ET



Harper wasn't always so silent. He spoke movingly about residential schools in 2008 when he apologized on behalf of the government.

The leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, always a disciplined communicator, is becoming positively sphinxlike as he heads to the election that will make or break his legacy.

Stephen Harper is increasingly declining to engage on subjects that don't advance his electoral interests, to the point that his silences are sometimes more noteworthy than the things he says.

Harper has failed, for example, to comment on the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report into crimes committed against aboriginals at residential schools.

Harper did not say anything at the closing ceremonies he attended at Rideau Hall. He did not hold a news conference, as most leaders would do as a matter of course when their government has received \$50-million report that took six years to put together.

But this leader doesn't do that kind of thing. The last time he held a real news conference in Ottawa was in December 2012.

Not only has he not held a news conference, he made no statement and did no interviews. He did comment during Question Period, but only by ritualistically parrying questions and attacking his opponents.

He missed an opportunity to play a helpful role in a national conversation that is taking place without him.

Harper's silence seems especially noteworthy since Justice Murray Sinclair's report calls for exactly the opposite: dialogue.

Many of Sinclair's recommendations have to do with making Canadians aware of the gaps in our history books where aboriginal stories should be, asking that law schools and journalism schools, for instance, add subjects to their curriculums.

"To the commission, reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in this country," Sinclair writes. "In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

"Too many Canadians know little or nothing about the deep historical roots of these conflicts. This lack of historical knowledge has serious consequences for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and for Canada as a whole."

Harper knows this history. He spoke movingly about it in 2008 when he apologized on behalf of the government

Harper knows this history. He spoke movingly about it in 2008 when he apologized on behalf of the government.

“You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey,” he said then. Now that the journey is ending, Harper is getting out of the car and walking off without saying a word.

He had the opportunity to say something helpful, to show leadership, as other party leaders, provincial and municipal leaders have done.

When he released his report, Sinclair said that “words are not enough” to address the legacy of suffering. But Harper has not even offered words.

After saying nothing in Ottawa, he went to the Toronto riding of Finance Minister Joe Oliver to warn television viewers about the threat from jihadi terrorists, delivering his tough lines in front of a backdrop of mute supporters and a huge flag, as he recently did in Montreal.

On Thursday, Harper took four questions. None were about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Nor did he say anything about the OPP report this week that found the RCMP failings left the force ill-prepared for the Oct. 22 shooting.

Harper has the right to hold his tongue, to only discuss subjects that might help him in the coming election.

And the rest of us have the right to take note of his silences and carry on conversations without him.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/stephen-maher-harper-has-become-positively-sphinxlike-staying-silent-on-truth-and-reconciliation>

If parties want to get elected, 'you better care about our issues' says AFN chief



A woman wipes a tear during the closing ceremony of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on Wednesday, June 3, 2015. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

"Where's our 'yes' from this Conservative government for First Nations people?"

That's the question **National Chief Perry Bellegarde** of the Assembly of First Nations is asking as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission wraps up [six years of hearings and research into the residential schools system](#) -- and as the Conservative government has mostly stayed silent on whether or not they will move to act on the TRC's 94 recommendations.

Those recommendations range from drafting new and revised legislation for education, child welfare and aboriginal languages to implementing the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and creating a national inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

You can read the full report [right here](#).

Bellegarde told *The House* his top priorities are education and child welfare, and that he's waiting for action from the government on those fronts.

"Everybody else seems to be getting a yes from the Conservatives," he said. "There's tax credits for families, businesses are getting tax cuts, everybody's getting a yes. Except us."

"Everybody else seems to be getting a yes from the Conservatives. There's tax credits for families, businesses are getting tax cuts, everybody's getting a yes. Except us." - *Perry Bellegarde, AFN National Chief*

Bellegarde pointed to the funding gap in education as something that could be immediately addressed by the federal government, responsible for funding on-reserve education.

"First Nations students on reserve are funded about 30 per cent less than non-Aboriginals," he said. "Tuition is \$6,500 per child. In the provincial school systems it's up to almost \$11,000 per child, in the French school systems it's almost \$20,000. So there's a huge fiscal gap."

The Conservatives' 2015 budget sets aside \$200 million over five years beginning in 2015-2016 to "help support First Nations to achieve better education outcomes, including building partnerships with provincial school systems" while an additional \$12 million will provide post-secondary scholarships to First Nations and Inuit students.

But the National Chief said that's not enough.

"The investment that is needed is huge," he told Solomon. "But again, it's an investment. Invest in the fastest growing segment of Canada's population. That's going to be good for this country."

"We've got to make these things an election issue"

With a federal election just months away, Bellegarde said the focus for Aboriginal Canadians is on changing a historically low voter turnout. In the 2011 federal election, the voter rate on reserve was 44 per cent compared to 61 per cent across the country.

"If we get our voters out, we can influence 51 ridings," he said. "First Nations' votes matter. If you want to get elected, you better care about our issues."

But Bellegarde said he won't be telling people which party to vote for.

"The only card I carry is a status card," he said. "A national chief is supposed to be non-partisan. But obviously you can look at the different party stances and the political platforms they have. Some are more favourable. People should make an educated and informed decision."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thehouse/chaos-in-the-senate-as-auditor-general-report-flags-improper-expenses-1.3097203/if-parties-want-to-get-elected-you-better-care-about-our-issues-says-afn-chief-1.3098751>

Federal government wary of UN indigenous rights declaration

KIM MACKRAEL

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jun. 05, 2015 8:18PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Jun. 05, 2015 10:58PM EDT

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for Canada to adopt a landmark UN declaration on indigenous rights is drawing attention to a long-standing debate about the document's compatibility with Canadian law.

Ottawa endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010, but has not taken steps to implement it, repeatedly expressing concern about some of its contents. The commission this week called on all levels of government to implement the declaration, saying it should be used as a framework for reconciliation with aboriginal people in Canada.

The declaration, which was voted on in 2007, is a global statement on the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples. It details the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, autonomy and nationality, as well as to land and natural resources.

Canada initially voted against the UN declaration along with the United States, New Zealand and Australia, saying that resource rights and other claims in the document's text could clash with the country's constitution. Several years later, Ottawa endorsed the document as "aspirational," while noting its concerns with some of the declaration's content.

Ken Coates, a researcher at the University of Saskatchewan who studies aboriginal rights and history, said the government had reasons to be wary of how the declaration might affect Canada.

"Long before the Conservative Party was in power, the Liberals before had some big issues with it," he said. "Not because it said things that were upsetting to the governments of the country ... but because of concern that the requirements in the declaration interfered with and overlapped with a bunch of Canadian laws and regulations, including things like modern land-claims treaties."

Prof. Coates called the UN document a powerful and emotional statement about the degree to which indigenous peoples around the world have shared a similar history of mistreatment through colonialism and occupation. However, he said it may not effectively respond to the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

If the declaration were ever considered to be legally binding, Prof. Coates said, it could "disrupt some very carefully developed and well-thought-out collaborations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people."

At issue is a legal requirement to consult and accommodate aboriginal people in circumstances in which their rights may be affected. Ottawa has argued that a shift to free, prior and informed consent – a concept envisioned in the UN declaration – could go further, possibly giving aboriginal people the power to veto a proposed project.

Aboriginal groups who support the document's implementation point out that the term "veto" does not exist in the UN declaration's text. The rights outlined in the document are relative, rather than absolute, they say, which means they must still be balanced against the rights of others and principles of good governance.

Paul Joffe, a lawyer representing the Grand Council of the Crees, said the declaration is drafted in broad terms and does not necessarily have to be enshrined in Canadian law on a line-for-line basis.

Instead, the government could work with aboriginal groups to

develop a plan for interpreting the document in a manner that would be compatible with Canadian law, Mr. Joffe said. “It’s a pretty collaborative process, and the government can choose to go one way or

another on how it might implement [the declaration],” he said.

Mr. Joffe added that free, prior and informed consent should not be viewed as a departure from Canadian legal precedent. That’s because previous court rulings on aboriginal rights have already indicated that full consent may be required in some cases, he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/federal-government-wary-of-un-indigenous-rights-declaration/article24833549/>

Bill S-6 to face final vote in House Monday evening

Controversial bill has faced dissent from First Nations and industry, gov't set to vote on it Monday night

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 08, 2015 1:17 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 08, 2015 1:17 PM CT



Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, says Bill S-6 is 'about securing investment,' but Yukon First Nations say it undermines their Umbrella Final Agreement. (The Canadian Press)

Bill S-6 is about to become federal law.

The Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act amends Yukon's Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act.

And it's no stretch to say it's easily the most unpopular federal bill to be considered in the territory.

The rumblings started last June, when Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Ruth Massie, said S-6 essentially gutted Yukon's environmental law - and turns the clock back on four decades of land-claims progress.

The main sticking point for First Nations is four amendments, added after the review period.

They are:

delegation of federal powers to Yukon government;

policy direction to the YESAA board;

timelines for assessments; and

exemptions from renewals and amendments



Ruth Massie, grand chief of the Yukon Council of First Nations, says Ottawa is turning back the clock on 40 years of land claim progress. The group has threatened a lawsuit if the bill passes.

Yukon First Nations say these amendments undermine their Umbrella Final Agreement with the federal and territorial governments. The government has said the amendments are necessary to attract business to the territory.

Massie threatened then — a full year ago — to seek redress in the courts if Bill S-6 becomes law.

And First Nations [have not swayed from that stance](#) in the ensuing 12 months.

Final vote today

Third reading debate took place on Friday, under a time allocation motion, passed by the Conservative MPs.

It's scheduled for a vote this evening in Ottawa, and then it must be proclaimed by the Governor General before it becomes actual law.

Yukon MP Ryan Leef was not in the chamber for a vote on second reading. However, he has stated that he supports the bill and would have voted 'yes,' had he been in the house.

Minister inflames already tense situation



Yukon MP Ryan Leef speaks with a member of the public at the Bill S-6 standing committee hearing in Whitehorse. Leef says he supports the bill. (Mike Rudyk/CBC)

Yukon First Nations have been vociferously opposed to the bill. In particular, they oppose four amendments that were added to the bill, at the insistence of the Yukon government.

Aboriginal Affairs minister Bernard Valcourt made that clear during the fall sitting of the House of Commons.

A delegation of Yukon chiefs went to Ottawa then to lobby against Bill S-6.

During a meeting with Valcourt, he told the coalition they were "not real governments... under the Umbrella Final Agreement."

[That assessment infuriated the chiefs](#), who said it was an insult.

Little Salmon Carmacks chief Eric Fairclough warned the Harper government that a lack of consultation on Bill S-6 will lead to a court challenge, with "more uncertainty, more mistrust, and more confrontation... the only certainty is that Bill S-6 will end up in court."

Valcourt's comment prompted Yukon premier Darrell Pasloski to an unusual move: he issued a statement, saying Yukon First Nations are governments, and [asking Valcourt to "correct the record."](#)

Industry nervous, speaks out

The mining industry, which typically flies well below the radar when it comes to standoffs between First Nations and other levels of government, has been vocal and on-the-record when it comes to Bill S-6.

The president of Casino Mining Corporation, Paul West-Sells, started the flurry of pleas to Ottawa when he [sent a letter last fall to Valcourt](#), asking him to recognize the industry's concerns and "the fragility of intergovernmental relations in the Yukon surrounding Bill S-6 and the negative impact this is having on the territory's mineral industry."

Golden Predator and Kaminak Gold have each added their voices, with the CEO of Kaminak, Eira Thomas, asking the federal government to "achieve a resolution." Rick Rule of Sprott Assessment Management — which funds mining projects — said simply: "If you want my money, don't ask me to fund a dispute."

Parliamentary committee hears concerns in Whitehorse

The standing committee on aboriginal affairs and northern development [travelled to Whitehorse at the end of March](#), to hear directly from Yukoners on the proposed legislation.



Parliamentary hearings on Bill S-6 were home to a packed house, as government leaders, industry, and First Nations met to discuss the proposed legislation. (Mike Rudyk/CBC)

Chief after chief told the committee that the amendments erode the foundation of the Umbrella Final Agreement and thus all subsequent final treaties with individual First Nations.

They said they cannot live with the four amendments — which includes the ability of the federal minister to transfer binding authority to a territorial counterpart — and say they have no option but to defend their land claims agreements in court.

Grand Chief Ruth Massie told a [town hall a few days before the committee hearing](#) that "we will not back down from the integrity of our agreements. We fought too long and too hard — and we gave up a lot."

Yukon premier Darrell Pasloski has not wavered in his defence of Bill S-6, telling opposition NDP and Liberals here they are "wrong" about the legislation, and sticking to his message track: "consistency will ensure a greater opportunity to attract business and investment that will create jobs for Yukoners."

Clock ticking towards midnight

Bill S-6 will pass without amendments suggested by opposition MPs. That means, after the vote later today, and once it is proclaimed into law, the clock has struck midnight — and all bets are off.

Investors and mining companies will be watching closely to see the reaction from Yukon First Nations leaders.

That response could include seeking a court injunction on application of the new law, as well as a lawsuit bearing the signatures of the majority of Yukon First Nations.

If that happens, the ensuing paralysis on Yukon resource development would make the [Peel lawsuit](#) look like small potatoes.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/bill-s-6-to-face-final-vote-in-house-monday-evening-1.3104834>

Editorial: Inexplicable delay by Wall

The StarPhoenix June 9, 2015



Lead Commissioner Murray Sinclair at hearings at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Saskatchewan National Event at Prairieland Park, June 22. The TRC event provides a forum for those affected by the legacy of Indian Residential School system.

Incredibly, it took the Saskatchewan government three full days to respond to the release of Justice Murray's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's summary report, and then only in the most general of terms concerning an issue that profoundly affects the province's social and economic wellbeing now and long into the future.

"We will create a multi-ministry team to carefully examine this report and the full report once released," Premier Brad Wall said in a statement issued late Friday.

"We will look to build on successes, such as teaching treaty and First Nations and Metis histories in the classroom and the joint task force on improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Metis people."

Mr. Wall wasn't alone among his peers from British Columbia to Manitoba to exercise caution regarding the wideranging recommendations to come out of the commission after six years of hearings into the residential school experience of aboriginal children, which has created generations of family dysfunction and social ills.

Perhaps it's a case of the provinces taking the stance that First Nations citizens primarily are a federal responsibility and, as such, awaiting to see what Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government - or its possible replacement after the October election - plan to do on everything from education funding to child welfare to aboriginal health and even a public inquiry into a disproportionately high rate of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Yet, the reality is that Mr. Wall, along with Ontario's Kathleen Wynne and Manitoba's Greg Selinger were among premiers who last year urged the federal government to change its mind and call a public inquiry. In the face of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's reticence, despite Justice Sinclair's arguments in favour of an inquiry because there's a lot to be gleaned from the exercise, the premiers could have reiterated their position.

And on funding of reserve schools, Mr. Wall has advocated for Ottawa to step up with money for First Nations kids that matches grants for provincially funded students. Given that Mr. Wall's agenda includes increasing aboriginal students' graduation rates and having them participate fully in our growing economy, the commission's report provided the opportunity for the premier to reiterate his call for Mr. Harper to make the sensible call on equitable funding.

From the commission's recommendation for a new royal proclamation that would strengthen the sovereignty of First Nations and have a bearing on the sharing of resource revenues - an idea Mr. Wall has rejected in the past - to its call for measures to reduce the number of aboriginal people in jails, there was plenty of important areas for the premier to consider and comment upon in a timely manner.

Doing everything possible to foster economic and social well-being among First Nations people and their communities is in the best interest of a province such as Saskatchewan with a high proportion of Canada's fastest growing population cohort. That also includes advocating on the national stage for aboriginal people whenever the opportunity arises, especially when federal leadership is weak or nonexistent.

The editorials that appear in this space represent the opinion of The StarPhoenix. They are unsigned because they do not necessarily represent the personal views of the writers.

The positions taken in the editorials are arrived at through discussion among the members of the newspaper's editorial board, which operates independently from the news departments of the paper.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Inexplicable+delay+Wall/11120060/story.html>

Three Aboriginal Senators named in Auditor General's report

[National News](#) | June 10, 2015 by [APTN National News](#) |

Julien Gignac

APTN National News

OTTAWA — Three Aboriginal senators' claims were included in a highly anticipated audit of Senate expenses released Tuesday by Auditor General Michael Ferguson.

Retired Senator Gerry St. Germain who represented British Columbia is one of four senators whose case could be forwarded to the RCMP for further investigation.

Germain's expense claims equated to \$55,588 in travel costs, according to the report. Spotty documentation has caused at least \$12,000 to be ill-accounted for.

Each Senator named in the report was able to respond to the findings.

Germain stated in the report that he disagrees with the findings, saying that the "presentation and tone of your general observations insinuate that I misappropriated my office resources in a nefarious manner. I find these apparent accusations to be a defamatory affront to my personal integrity."

Northwest Territories Senator Nick Sibbeston racked up \$50,102, the bulk of which was used for travel, too, states the report. Nine instances of extended stopovers were recorded, along with frequent trips to western Canada and independent trips made by his spouse.

One night stopovers are considered to be a "reasonable practice," says the report.

Sibbeston's comments allude to the "casual" and sometimes "spontaneous" nature of business meetings in the territory and that northern travel is expensive at best. He goes on to state, "perhaps I could have been better at keeping records."

New Brunswick Maliseet Senator Sandra Nicholas-Lovelace bill totaled \$75,227, the majority of which was used for travel-related purposes including trips where she stayed in Fredericton for longer than one night.

“These extended stays, some as long as nine nights, is a matter of convenience for individuals travelling to Fredericton to meet with her,” Nicholas-Lovelace stated in the report.

Nicholas Lovelace has filed for arbitration.

The report recommends creating an oversight body that is independent from the senate, stating that it should have complete access and power to conduct internal or external audits. The inner-workings of this body should be open to the public, its findings published on its website.

Whether the Senate accepts the Auditor General’s recommendations is yet to be determined.



Senate Speaker Leo Housakos addressing the media Tuesday. Photo Julien Gignac/APTN

“Our intent is to render the Senate of Canada an accountable, responsive, transparent legislature,” said Senate Speaker Leo Housakos during a press conference after the report was released. “A body that our citizens of our great country will and can respect.”

30 sitting and former senators exercised expenditures Auditor General Michael Ferguson “determined were not in accordance with the applicable senate rules, policies, or guidelines,” states the report.

The Senate develops its own system of self-governance and determine what will be disclosed to the public.

“In our current audit,” the report states, “we found that in many cases, Senators did not maintain records to document the parliamentary business that they conducted while spending public funds.”

Senators must keep track of what they spend, “including hospitality events, attendees of those events a recipients of gifts with a value that exceeds \$50,” according to the report.

Close to \$1-million in public funds were used to accommodate the spending habits of the Senate.

Beginning on April 1, 2011 and ending March 31, 2013, the audit examined 116 current and former senators. There are 105 current Canadian senators.

Two other Aboriginal Senators, Lillian Dyck of Saskatchewan and Charlie Watt of Quebec are not named in the report.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/06/10/three-aboriginal-senators-named-auditor-generals-report/>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Vote of confidence for B.C. pipelines as TransCanada Corp wins aboriginal support on two LNG projects

[Claudia Cattaneo](#) | June 4, 2015 7:29 PM ET



One project, a 900-kilometre line that would cost more than \$5 billion, would wind through the northern part of the province and feed two to 3.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day to the Petronas-led Pacific NorthWest LNG project in Lelu Island, pictured, near Prince Rupert, B.C.

The road to starting a liquefied natural gas industry in British Columbia has been long and fraught with U-turns, but TransCanada Corp. says there is room for optimism after it won significant aboriginal support for two massive gas pipelines.

The Calgary-based company has been quietly working on the two proposals, known as Prince Rupert Gas Transmission (PRGT) and Coastal GasLink Pipeline, for about two years to link rich gas fields in northeast B.C. to proposed liquefaction projects on the coast.

Brian Hutchinson: A ballyhooed “brand-new LNG sector” is now to include one, two,

perhaps three additional projects by the end of the decade. The whole scheme was once valued at \$1 trillion; the figure changes, like most everything else LNG-in-B.C. related.

That's the thing with long-range economic forecasts, energy pricing and politicians: None are terribly reliable. As things stand, there are plenty of "ifs" in this one leading LNG proposal alone.

The first, a 900-kilometre line that would cost more than \$5 billion, would wind through the northern part of the province and feed two to 3.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day to the Petronas-led Pacific NorthWest LNG project in Lelu Island near Prince Rupert.

The second, a 750-kilometre pipeline that would cost \$6 billion and would be sited further south, would ship a similar amount into the Royal Dutch Shell PLC-led LNG Canada project in Kitimat. The two LNG projects have exclusive use of the pipelines.

Their cost and complexity are similar to the stalled Northern Gateway bitumen pipeline proposed by Enbridge Inc., and the TransMountain bitumen pipeline expansion proposed by Kinder Morgan that is being reviewed by regulators. Both are struggling with aboriginal push-back.

"I think we will get the vast majority of the nations to support the projects," Alex Pourbaix, TransCanada's president of development, said in an interview Thursday. Each line crosses the traditional lands of 19 First Nations.

The company got there by raising the bar on aboriginal consultation and accommodation — billions in business opportunities, hundreds of millions in 'value-sharing' payments, a whopping 1,600 meetings so far to explain its plans — such as showing how a pipe is laid or how water crossings are protected.

The first and most important step is winning trust, said Dean Patry, president of PRGT.

"We had success by illustrating that you don't have to choose between your salmon, or your hunting and fishing, or your land, and the project," he said. "We strive to demonstrate that you can have both."

Wilf Adam, chief of the Lake Babine Nation whose traditional territory straddles 20% of the PRGT right of way, got behind the PRGT project to ensure his band would have a say over its impact on the environment, and particularly the fish his community depends on.

"We looked at it very carefully," he said. "We studied it, we talked with our experts, and the conclusion we came up with is that if we sit on the side, they will build a pipeline, and we will have no involvement in it. We needed to be part of it so that we put in the safeguard for the environment and for where the pipeline should go and where it shouldn't go."

While opposed to Northern Gateway, the 2,500-member band is comfortable with gas because if the pipeline ruptures it evaporates, he said. The band has locked up at least \$100 million in benefits over 40 years. Agreements in support of PRGT have also been signed with the Gitanyow, Kitselas, Doig River, Halfway River, Yekooche and Nisga'a Lisims First Nations. Similar agreements have been signed in support of the Coastal line, but they have not yet been announced.

TransCanada believes the aboriginal progress bolsters the two LNG projects.

They have yet to announce final investment decisions, but Pourbaix believes they're on their way.

"From everything we have seen this remains a compelling economic opportunity for these developers, that is what they tell us," he said. "They are collectively spending very, very significant amounts of money advancing these projects."

The Petronas project was hurt last month by a decision by the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation near Prince Rupert to reject a \$1.14 billion in benefits over 40 years.

The Shell project could be re-assessed in light of the oil major's takeover of BP Group PLC, which was planning a competing plant.

Meanwhile, declining LNG prices in Asia are raising questions about whether Canada's West Coast LNG is too far behind in an already-crowded field of up-and-coming suppliers.

But Patry said the Petronas and Shell projects are more advanced than the 20-or-so proposed in B.C., are proposed by multinationals used to commodity price cycles and that are keen to take advantage of cost savings for labour, services and equipment offered as a result of the downturn in oil and gas prices.

"There is a silver lining in the pressure that the oil and gas sector is under," Patry said. "Whereas a year ago the chief concern you had was managing the supply chain and managing the cost, we have actually identified and captured significant cost reductions on our pipeline projects."

If the Pacific Northwest project announces an investment decision in the coming months, Pourbaix said construction of the associated pipeline would start in the fall.

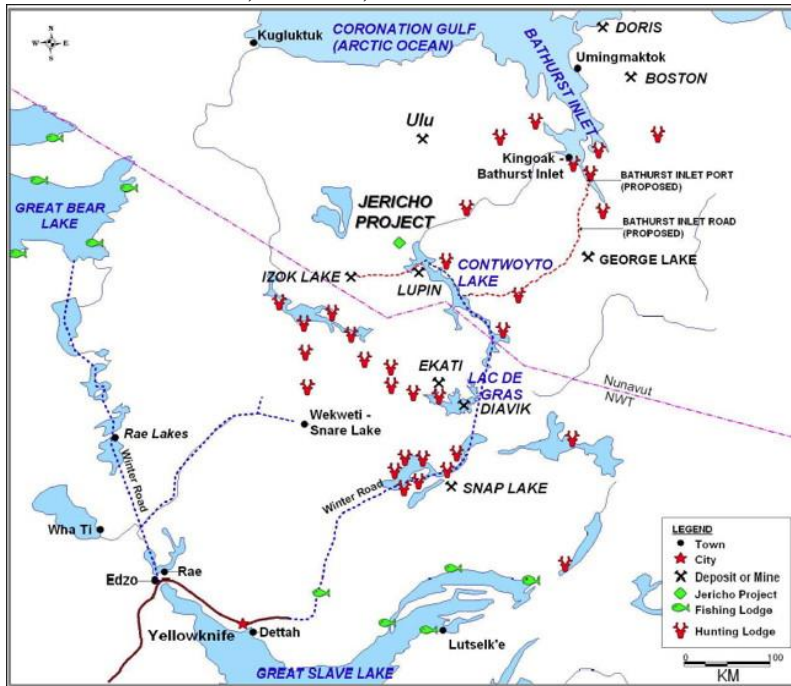
That would make it the first new energy pipeline through British Columbia to finally take off. It's a big if, but wouldn't that be something.

Direct Link: http://business.financialpost.com/news/energy/b-c-pipeline-prospects-brighten-after-transcanada-corp-wins-strong-aboriginal-support-for-two-massive-lng-pipelines?_lsa=6cd1-980e

Teams to inspect abandoned Nunavut diamond mine this week

AANDC and NIRB staff head to Jericho to take stock of tailings and tank farms

LISA GREGOIRE, June 08, 2015 - 7:30 am



A map showing the location of the Jericho mine, just north of the NWT boundary and at the northern tip of Contwoyto Lake in western Nunavut. (MAP COURTESY OF NIRB)

The mothballed Jericho diamond mine is still under [“care and maintenance”](#) from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, but monitoring officers from the Nunavut Impact Review Board still have to make periodic visits to ensure the site is safe for people, animals and the land around it.

So they’re doing that next week.

The NIRB’s executive director, Ryan Barry, said Heather Rasmussen, a NIRB technical advisor, will accompany officials from AANDC and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association on a day-long tour of the site this week, about 240 kilometres southeast of Kugluktuk.

Barry said Rasmussen will tour the facilities and surrounding areas to inspect it for structural integrity and to make sure there is no environmental degradation at the tank farm, for instance, and processed kimberlite tailings area.

“She’ll look at doing a tour of the site to understand the current condition of the site and whether there are any environmental issues of note, any structures that are a cause for concern, containment structures that are subject to failure,” he said.

Rasmussen will also look for evidence that wildlife have frequented the site or that birds are nesting in equipment, he said. The mine’s final environmental assessment report noted that caribou migrate north through the area in spring to calving grounds and south again in late summer.

“Even when a site is in care and maintenance, the board still does a lot of work trying to ensure whoever’s in charge of the site is aware of any potential environmental risks from our perspective,” Barry said.

Luigi Torretti, the KIA’s assistant director of lands and environment, said part of the Jericho site is on Inuit-owned lands and therefore the KIA has been, and continues to be, involved in monitoring the site.

“The KIA and AANDC have been working together, and communicating regularly (approximately every month), to ensure that the site is environmentally stable,” Torretti wrote in a June 5 email to *Nunatsiaq News*.

“The Tahiryuak (Contwoyto Lake) area has been very important to Inuit for cultural and subsistence reasons,” he wrote, but added he doesn’t think the abandoned site poses any undue risk to caribou or other wildlife.

NIRB staff members have monitored what was Nunavut’s first operating diamond mine since Shear Diamonds (Nunavut) Corp. washed its hands of the operation after extracting diamonds for about four months in 2012.

Before that, Jericho was owned by Tahera Diamond Corp., which operated the mine, located in the western Arctic’s diamond belt, from 2006 to 2008 and then went into creditor protection in January 2008.

The last Jericho site visit reports on the NIRB website are from summer and fall of 2013 and were submitted by Delta Engineering Ltd. of Yellowknife, on behalf of Public Works and Government Services Canada’s Northern Contaminated Sites Program.

Because of reports that dust from kimberlite tailings was blowing away from the site during winter, Delta was instructed to spray the area with water to encase the tailings in ice.

According to the 2004 NIRB final hearing report, issued prior to Tahera obtaining its project certificate — a report emblazoned with a colourful tundra and majestic caribou — the tailings piles would be created from spent kimberlite along with waste rock and ore stockpiles.

Kimberlite is an igneous rock that often contains diamonds, so when companies are looking for those precious jewels, they search out areas with high concentrations of kimberlite.

When Delta was on site in October 2013, it reported covering about 60 per cent of the tailings piles in ice.

“A pack of six wolves were observed on several occasions on the site,” Delta reported. “They were healthy, demonstrated no fear of humans and did not seem bothered by the site work.”

In a separate report submitted to the NIRB, dated September 2013, the same company reported on the status of buildings and other facilities at the site.

The report details how water was collecting in berms constructed to hold fuel tank farms.

“A section of the berm containing the small tank farm has settled by an estimated 0.4 metres over 5 meters, increasing the risk of discharge,” the Delta report states.

The water, which was tested and found to be non-toxic, was pumped through a hose and then sprayed into a mist and accordingly, more than 50 cubic metres of water was eliminated through evaporation.

Crews also found barrels containing “hydrocarbon contaminated soils” were full of water and were “spilling hydraulic fluid product out of the barrels and into the lined facility.”

The barrels were covered in a tarp to “reduce further spillage.”

Torretti said both the fuel tanks and tailings piles are on Crown lands and that AANDC has been monitoring those to ensure they don’t cause any contamination. He added that to the KIA’s knowledge, “there is very little, if any fuel left in the tanks.”

The September report from Delta also noted animal tracks on or near the site from grizzly bears, wolves, foxes and thousands of caribou. They also saw live falcons, owls, hawks, rodents, geese and ptarmigan.

And it appears that not only animals were frequenting the abandoned mine site in the fall of 2013.

“All vehicles were filled with diesel before departure from the site on August 18 and upon return on September 12 the vehicles were only half full, there was a small boat motor missing and a [newspaper] dated August 28, 2013 was discovered in the van on site.”

Communications staff from the AANDC sent a brief update on the site in an email to *Nunatsiaq News* on June 5.

Michelle Perron mentioned three AANDC site visits from 2014 and added that an “assessment team” of engineers and specialists have gathered information for a “Phase III Environmental Assessment and a Remedial Options Analysis,” for the defunct Jericho mine.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674teams_to_inspect_abandoned_diamond_mine_this_week/

Caitlyn Vernon: B.C. businesses stand with First Nations against Enbridge

by [Caitlyn Vernon](#) on June 8th, 2015 at 11:43 AM
SHARED 63 [1](#)



Saanich Organics is just one business backing First Nations' legal challenges through Pull Together.
[@caitlynvernon/Twitter](#)

Each week, farmers across the province set up their farm stands, selling the fruits of their hard labour. Farming is not a huge money maker, and this year, with barely any rain for months, I hear stories from farmers who fear crop failures at significant financial loss. And yet Richmond-based [Sweet Digz Farm](#), [Saanich Organics](#), and many more farms are donating proceeds to [Pull Together](#) through the summer: “As farmers, we share a love of the earth, a dependence on the land and water, and a concern for how pipelines and oil tankers will affect indigenous lands,” states [Farmers for Pull Together](#).

They join businesses from across B.C. that are stepping forward, educating their customers, and donating profits to [Pull Together](#) in support of the First Nations in court to stop the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline and tankers project.

These businesses understand that tar sands pipelines and tankers are not good for our economy. Looking beneath the slick ads and inflated jobs promises, British Columbians know that international corporations like Enbridge don't have our best interests at heart. Their sole goal is to make a profit for their shareholders, whether that is through transporting oil or [profiting from spill response](#).

Local businesses are a different story; offering hope and possibility for a more robust economic future.

Many have jumped on board the [Week to End Enbridge](#), June 13 to 21. Together, we are marking the one-year anniversary of the federal decision to approve Northern Gateway with a groundswell of support for the First Nations legal challenges that seek to overturn that decision.

There will be a community dance in Prince George, a picnic in Kitimat, a paddle in Victoria, and many more gatherings already planned all across the province, from Fort St. John to Kelowna.

In Revelstoke, [Sangha Bean Cafe](#) will be donating 25 cents of every coffee sold during the Week to End Enbridge to the Pull Together campaign. [Uprising Breads Bakery](#) in Vancouver will donate 20 percent of their proceeds from the weekend of June 13 and 14, and [The Soap Dispensary](#) will donate 10 percent of theirs.

The [Pull Together](#) initiative was launched by Sierra Club B.C. and RAVEN Trust as a tangible way that individuals, community groups, and businesses can offer moral and financial support to these First Nations legal challenges. Over \$390,000 has been raised so far, by online fundraising, businesses donating their profit margin, and community events. Our goal is to raise a total of \$600,000 by the summer, so the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai'xais, Gitga'at, Haida, Gitxaala, Nadleh Whut'en, and Nak'azdli nations have the resources they need before court hearings are held this fall.

Daniel Terry of [Denman Island Chocolate](#) developed a [Pull Together chocolate bar](#) that's now for sale at over [70 locations](#) across B.C., with proceeds going to support Pull Together. Who knew stopping a pipeline could be so delicious?! "I feel like it's really important to not just cheer for First Nations from the sidelines, but to actually participate in enabling their legal fight," says Terry.

Moksha Yoga has raised over \$13,000 through yoga classes and film screenings. [Spirit Bear Lodge](#), a community-based ecotourism venture owned and operated by the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, will donate [100 percent of the package price](#) of the next two guests who request that their trip cost be donated to Pull Together. "The Spirit Bear and the Great Bear Rainforest are too precious to all of humanity to let Enbridge take chances with the future of the coast," says Spirit Bear Lodge general manager Tim McGrady.

If we play our cards right in the transition toward a clean energy economy we can replace big corporate ownership with diverse and resilient local economies that are more equitable, democratic, grounded within ecological limits and respectful of First Nations.

Denman Island Chocolate teamed up with Bandidas Restaurant and Marketworks to send an [open letter](#) to the B.C. business community, inviting others to support Pull Together: “As social entrepreneurs we have the power to have a strong voice in the community. If this is a cause that is meaningful to you, if you believe that keeping B.C.’s interior and coast free from tar sands pipelines and tankers, we invite you to risk standing for the importance of this issue in a visible way. You may be surprised at what is possible when we take these kinds of risks.”

For more information or to get involved, go to www.pull-together.ca, watch our recent [campaign video](#), or contact leila@sierraclub.bc.ca.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/466401/caitlyn-vernon-bc-businesses-stand-first-nations-against-enbridge>

QIA, NTI team up against Baffinland's request for NPC exemption

Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. to oppose granting an exemption from NPC

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 09, 2015 6:21 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 09, 2015 6:22 AM CT



A view of Baffinland Iron Mine's camp at Milne Inlet in Nunavut in August 2014. Baffinland is seeking to ship iron ore 10 months of the year, instead of just in the summer months, as it does currently. (Baffinland)

Two Nunavut land claims organizations are teaming up to fight Baffinland Iron Mines' request to have its 10-month-per-year shipping proposal bypass the Nunavut Planning commission.

Baffinland's latest proposal for its Mary River project asks to ship iron ore 10 months of the year from Milne Inlet on North Baffin Island to Europe, something the [Nunavut Planning Commission says does not fit into the current land use plan for the area](#). Currently, the company only ships iron ore during the summer months.

The company has requested to bypass the Planning commission and instead have its project proposal assessed by the Nunavut Impact Review Board, a request Nunavut Premier [Peter Taptuna endorsed in a letter](#) to federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Bernard Valcourt in May.

But in their own letter to Valcourt, dated June 8, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association say that granting an exemption and bypassing the role of the Planning Commission is contradictory to the spirit and intent of their land claims.

"Circumventing the purpose and core functions of an Institution of Public Government (IPG) like the NPC would undermine the well-designed regulatory processes under the Nunavut Agreement and set a dangerous precedent," reads the letter, signed by the presidents of both associations.

In the letter, NTI and QIA urge Valcourt to deny Baffinland's request for an exemption and instead work with the Planning commission to help it produce an amendment application as soon as possible.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/qia-nti-team-up-against-baffinland-s-request-for-npc-exemption-1.3105701>

Province, First Nation harvest ocean energy near Metchosin

Richard Watts / Times Colonist
June 10, 2015 06:00 AM

First Nations and provincial politicians gathered at Beecher Bay near Metchosin on Tuesday to launch a pioneering project in sustainable energy.

John Rustad, B.C. minister of aboriginal affairs and reconciliation, announced a \$400,000 grant to build an ocean thermal energy transfer system to heat Spirit Bay, a housing development already underway by the Sci'aneu (Cheanuh) Beecher Bay band and its minority business partner, the non-profit Trust for Sustainable Development.

"When you think of the potential for the community it really is quite remarkable," said Rustad. "And one of the most unique features is, of course, clean energy."

Rustad said the money is from the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund, created in 2010. So far, the fund has doled out \$6.5 million in funding to more than 100 First Nations in B.C.

Also, \$3.5 million has been approved for eight clean energy projects such as wind, solar, ocean thermal and run-of-the river electricity development.

Later, Rustad said the B.C. government hopes by assisting and partnering with First Nations in sustainable, clean energy projects, it can move forward with a reconciliation process, which was highlighted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report to Parliament last week.

“Ultimately, this is what we are all trying to do, looking forward, working together, building a long term reconciliation and creating a brighter future for the children,” Rustad said.

The Beecher Bay money will be used to build an ocean thermal heat transfer energy service for the first 50 homes in the Spirit Bay development.

That heating system will be expanded as the community gets built out.

Kris Obrigewitsch, executive director of the Trust for Sustainable Development, said all new homes and buildings in Spirit Bay will be fitted with heat pumps, for warmth in winter and air-conditioning in summer.

Those home heat pumps will be tied in with a large scale heat exchanger that will use the ocean to operate its thermal exchange, said Obrigewitsch.

He said pipes that will be used to pump a heat transfer medium through the home heat systems have already been installed.

It's hoped construction and installation of the ocean loop and its heat exchanger will begin by fall.

The energy made available from the ocean thermal exchange will be sold by a local utility company. The utility will be owned by the Beecher Bay Band and generate revenue by selling heat and cooling energy to the Spirit Bay homeowners and possibly beyond.

Spirit Bay, built on Beecher Bay land, will in about 10 years become a 100-acre, 600-home community, with homes priced at \$259,000 and up.

The Spirit Bay project is 51 per cent owned by the band and 49 per cent owned by the Trust for Sustainable Development.

So far, three homes have been built. One is already occupied by its owners and two others are being used as show suites.

Beecher Bay Band Chief Russ Chipps said an ocean thermal exchange is a wonderful fit between modern technology and First Nations traditions.

Using heat-exchange technology to gather the warm and cooling temperatures from the ocean matches the way his people gathered salmon from the ocean without endangering the survival of the species.

The heat-exchange technology will harvest a resource, heat energy. But like his people's fishing of salmon, it won't threaten the ocean ecosystem.

"You can say it's based on a traditional use of the water," said Chipps.

"We are the salmon people," he said. "We use the water to get our food, our medicine and now power."

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/business/province-first-nation-harvest-ocean-energy-near-metchosin-1.1963579#sthash.GBD5KsnY.dpuf>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Churchill MP asks what's holding up Nelson House treaty land entitlement agreement

[Ian Graham](#) / Thompson Citizen

June 5, 2015 12:00 AM

Churchill MP Niki Ashton says inaction on the part of the federal government is preventing the approval of the Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) for Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) at Nelson House.

"The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba has been waiting 12 years for the approval for their Treaty Land Entitlement," said Ashton in the House of Commons May 29. "The minister [of Aboriginal Affairs Bernard Valcourt] has given no reason for the delay, which is costing the First Nation millions of dollars – money that could be spent to improve the lives of their people. They are among 15 First Nations in Manitoba who are simply waiting for a signature from the minister. When will the minister sign the ministerial order for the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation?"

Greg Bickford, parliamentary secretary to the aboriginal affairs minister, responded to Ashton's question without providing any timeline.

"We take the matter of addition to reserve and TLE lands very seriously as we do improving economic conditions on reserve and that's why we have continued to invest in on-reserve infrastructure," said Bickford. "We've continued to invest in communities across the country, Every time we do, Mr. Speaker, the NDP votes against it. It would be nice to have them on side for once."

TLE agreements in Manitoba are signed between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations that did not receive their full allotment of reserve land under numbered treaties signed with Canada between 1871 and 1910. Canada, Manitoba and 29 First Nations in the province agreed upon TLE settlements between 1994 and 2009 – eight through individual TLE settlements and 21 through the TLE Framework Agreement.

An agreement between the two levels of government and NCN (including O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation) that would see 79,345 acres of Crown land and a federal government payment of \$1,933,017 go to NCN was reached but is one of six in Northern Manitoba – along with those between the two levels of government and Fox Lake, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (including Marcel Colomb First Nation), Sayisi Dene, Shamattawa and York Factory – that had not been executed as of May 13, 2011, when a facts page on TLE in Manitoba was last updated.

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/churchill-mp-asks-what-s-holding-up-nelson-house-treaty-land-entitlement-agreement-1.1957680#sthash.rID7PHIQ.dpuf>

Troy Hunter: First Nations, Indian bands, fiduciary obligations, and free, prior, and informed consent

by [Troy Hunter](#) on June 8th, 2015 at 2:42 PM
SHARED 205 [2](#)



The B.C. Court of Appeal made a unanimous three-judge panel decision on June 3 in [*Louie v. Louie*](#) in relation to an Indian band council and breach of fiduciary duty. The case involved the Lower Kootenay Indian Band, which is part of the Ktunaxa First Nation.

The appeal court had overturned the earlier decision and agreed that in a fiduciary relationship such as that of a band council to its band members that the band councillors are not permitted to put their personal interests first or to make a profit, without having obtained the prior consent of the membership as directed by section 2(3) of the Indian Act which states:

Unless the context otherwise requires or this Act otherwise provides,

- (a) a power conferred on a band shall be deemed not to be exercised unless it is exercised pursuant to the consent of a majority of the electors of the band; and
- (b) a power conferred on the council of a band shall be deemed not to be exercised unless it is exercised pursuant to the consent of a majority of the councillors of the band present at a meeting of the council duly convened.

Additionally, the B.C. Court of Appeal confirmed that band councils are created under the Indian Act, they are creatures of statute whose powers relate to “administration of Band affairs on their respective reserves”, and that they have “no other source of power”. It seems some band councils operate under a guise of what is referred to as custom; however, the BCCA pointed out that such custom is different than what would attract s.35 Constitutional protection. However, some band councils exercising self-government authority beyond the scope of the Indian Act power under the so-called “inherent right” or “inherent jurisdiction” might want to ensure that they have been duly authorized to do so.

While the decision in *Louie v. Louie* dealt with a band council awarding themselves a one-time honorarium bonus without having obtained the consent of the membership, the

implications also involve other areas. In essence, the top court in British Columbia has upheld the Indian Act on the basis of the fiduciary principle.

When considering the notion of free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) as required under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and in examining the Indian Act, including the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Manual for the Administration of Band Moneys, it seems that the notion of FPIC is well embedded in the enactment and manual as it relates to the communal rights of aboriginal peoples. I recently posed the question to a FPIC forum hosted by Carleton University as to who has authority to give free, prior, informed consent; it seems that there are varied opinions. Under the *Louie v. Louie* BCCA decision, it's clear that band councils operating under the Indian Act have consent requirements with their membership.

First Nations and Indian bands in undertaking due diligence ought to ensure they have not only obtained the free, prior, and informed consent of their members but that they have the evidence to back this up. The manual states, "Since section 69 authority [band management of revenue moneys] will ultimately rest with the Bands' Chief and council. Departmental records must demonstrate that the consent of the membership had been obtained."

It would seem that, the idea of free, prior, informed consent is a communal right. This communal right seems to have been first identified in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, where it is stated, "if at any Time any of the Said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for that Purpose". It then appears that the notion of free, prior, and informed consent was embedded in the Proclamation made in 1763 and is now a right or freedom that belongs to the aboriginal peoples' themselves.

Moreover, section 25 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states:

Section 25 – The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including

- (a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and
- (b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

The notion of consent was also referred to in the landmark Supreme Court of Canada case *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014 SCC 44, where aboriginal title was officially recognized. In that case, at paragraph 76, the chief justice stated:

The right to control the land conferred by Aboriginal title means that governments and others seeking to use the land must obtain the consent of the Aboriginal title holders.

In the *Tsilhqot'in* case, it was not identified as to how to obtain the consent of an aboriginal group; however, these are communal rights and band councils must be aware of exercising powers as a fiduciary.

Band moneys are for the collective, they come because aboriginal rights and title are held communally; thus, the proper rights holders are the band members. When a band council negotiates they do so for the benefit of the band; it is the band that must consent as to how its collective rights are to be affected. This is reflected in the Manual for the Administration of Band Moneys where informed community consent is required in respect of settlement type funds. Settlement type agreements must be ratified by referendum based on the informed community consent of the membership. Also, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized the communal aspect of aboriginal title and rights in *Delgamuukw* and *Tsilhqot'in* and others.

In *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010:

115 A further dimension of aboriginal title is the fact that it is held communally. Aboriginal title cannot be held by individual aboriginal persons; it is a collective right to land held by all members of an aboriginal nation. Decisions with respect to that land are also made by that community. This is another feature of aboriginal title which is *sui generis* and distinguishes it from normal property interests.

In *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014 SCC 44, [2014] 2 S.C.R. 256

[86] First, the Crown's fiduciary duty means that the government must act in a way that respects the fact that Aboriginal title is a group interest that inheres in present and future generations. The beneficial interest in the land held by the Aboriginal group vests communally in the title-holding group. This means that incursions on Aboriginal title cannot be justified if they would substantially deprive future generations of the benefit of the land.

Getting back to *Louie v. Louie*, the BCCA summarized their decision by stating:

The removal of \$25,000 from Band funds and the payment of \$5,000 to each of the defendants was a clear and significant personal benefit to them, and them only. As a one-time payment, it did not benefit future members of Council or of the Band. Rather, it was a detriment to the Band. The conclusion seems to me inescapable that this was a breach of fiduciary duty, even in the context of a relatively informal and custom-based governance structure. In my view, such a structure should not deprive members of the Band of the protection of the fiduciary principle. They were entitled to hold the defendants to the high standard to which other fiduciaries are held in this country.

While *Louie v. Louie* stands to uphold the fiduciary duties, it also points to the need for having obtained free, prior, and informed consent of the true rights holders by a majority of the band, which in that case, hadn't been proven.

On a side note in regards to fiduciary, in interpreting indigenous law, creation stories and oral histories can inform about indigenous customs or traditions. In 1918, the anthropologist Franz Boaz published a number of such stories in *Kutenai Tales*, one of which is the Ktunaxa story called "The Youth Who Killed The Chiefs". In that story, there were chiefs that did not share food and the people were hungry. A young warrior killed those chiefs that did not share so that the community would also benefit. The moral of the story is that to be a chief, one must put the people first, and that is what the fiduciary principle is all about.

Troy Hunter is a Ktunaxa lawyer who practices aboriginal law with [Sea to Sky Law Corporation](#) in British Columbia. Nothing herein is intended to create a lawyer-client relationship and shall not be construed as legal advice.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/466481/troy-hunter-first-nations-indian-bands-fiduciary-obligations-and-free-prior-and-informed>

In aboriginal affairs, negotiation is a two-way street

JEFFREY SIMPSON

The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jun. 12, 2015 3:00AM EDT

Last updated Thursday, Jun. 11, 2015 5:50PM EDT

Jim Fulton was a wonderful man, a fine member of Parliament and a friend who died way too young at the age of 58 in 2008.

With his customary commitment to improve the lot of aboriginals, he had thrown himself as an MP into the national referendum arguing for the 1992 Charlottetown accord, which his New Democratic Party endorsed. He crisscrossed his vast Skeena riding in northwest British Columbia, a riding with many aboriginal residents, urging them to appreciate the gains the accord would give natives.

He returned shaken to Ottawa. At breakfast a week or so after the referendum, he recounted his shock at the anti-aboriginal sentiments in his riding that the accord had produced. He was equally shocked by the apathy and hostility of aboriginals toward an

accord that their national leader, Ovide Mercredi, had negotiated on their behalf. Mr. Fulton had never seen such a chasm in his riding, he recalled, and it shook him.

Mr. Mercredi, then grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, had been at the table with the first ministers negotiating the accord. His full participation was a first, and the gains in the accord for aboriginals were considerable.

Aboriginal governments, the accord stated, were to “constitute one of the three orders of government in Canada.” The constitution would be amended to recognize the “inherent right of self-government within Canada.” There were other clauses, too, to enhance aboriginal rights.

The Charlottetown accord died in a national referendum for many reasons, of which “gains” by aboriginals was a minor factor, except in places such as Skeena. But the accord was also rejected by aboriginals on reserves, despite the entreaties of Mr. Mercredi, who campaigned hard to persuade his peoples of its merits.

Aboriginal critics argued that the accord did not go far enough. Aboriginals did not trust aboriginal leaders. Whatever. A genuine attempt at reconciliation was rejected by non-aboriginals for many reasons, but it was rejected by aboriginals because it did not meet their maximalist demands. That was 23 years ago.

In 2009, British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell stunned his cabinet (as he sometimes did). He had already proclaimed a “new relationship” with aboriginals, and changed the relevant department’s title to Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. Then, he announced an offer to recognize aboriginal title to land, holus-bolus, something no other premier ever contemplated.

Frustrated by the snail-like pace of treaty negotiations, Mr. Campbell made a sweeping, albeit vague, promise that he had negotiated with aboriginal leaders. When these leaders took his startling offer of what we might call today “reconciliation” to their members, they said no. Not enough, apparently. Maximalist attitudes prevailed.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who is often pilloried for his lack of interest in aboriginal matters, became frustrated when his government’s native-education policy was roundly condemned. So he pushed aside his aboriginal affairs minister and sat down mano a mano with Shawn Atleo, then the grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Mr. Harper tore up his government’s proposals and renegotiated them entirely.

Michael Mendelson of the Caledon Institute, no friend of the Harper government, wrote a detailed review of what resulted, the proposed First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act. He dismissed completely the accusation that Mr. Harper was obdurate and unreasonable and that Mr. Atleo sold out. It was a fair and reasonable deal that gave aboriginals major gains in money and control.

But more radical aboriginals tore into the 2014 agreement, got heaps of media coverage, chastised the Harper government and unseated Mr. Atleo. Once again, an attempt at progress – “reconciliation” if you prefer – failed, but not for lack of trying.

These three events – and there are others – at least slightly modify the apparently entrenched narrative that “reconciliation” has not been tried in good faith by governments, and that the failure to achieve agreements nudging Canada toward “reconciliation” has been entirely the fault of governments. They bear some blame for the unhappy state of current affairs, to be sure, but not all of it.

Political failures have opened a path for eager courts to march boldly into aboriginal affairs, so that most of the action has been created by “judge-made law.”

Whether by clever strategy or happenstance, some aboriginal leaders have been better served by taking maximalist positions and awaiting the next Supreme Court of Canada ruling, such as last year’s Tsilhqot’in Nation decision that moved the yardstick decidedly in their favour. This appears to have served them better than entering into major agreements with governments and being accused by their people of selling out.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/negotiation-and-reconciliation-is-a-two-way-street/article24919535/>

What Will Aboriginal Title Rights Mean for LNG Development?

Posted: 06/10/2015 11:00 am EDT Updated: 06/10/2015 2:59 pm EDT \



Last summer, I wrote that the Supreme Court's Tsilhqot'in decision, which for the first time granted Aboriginal title outside an Indian reserve, was going to be a real game changer and would "[increase uncertainty in Canada's natural resource sectors](#) in areas lacking treaties with First Nations."

Since then we've seen First Nations in British Columbia serve [eviction notices](#) to corporations, take resource companies to court over title claims, and most recently, the Lax Kw'alaams band reject a billion dollar deal from Pacific NorthWest LNG for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project proposed on Crown land. [Last Wednesday](#), Premier Christy Clark said that project will move forward, although negotiations are ongoing with the band. This project, if it eventually breaks ground, could net up to [4,500 construction jobs](#) and an investment of \$11 billion in B.C.

All of this this uncertainty, spurred by last summer's court decision, has reduced confidence in B.C.'s mining sector. For example, in 2014, 50 per cent of respondents to the Fraser Institute [annual survey of mining company executives](#) indicated that land uncertainty was either a strong deterrent to investment or a reason to simply not invest, up from 32 per cent in 2013. Increased uncertainty also threatens LNG investment in B.C. The LNG sector is expected to yield great returns for British Columbians if projects come to fruition. The provincial government states that if five LNG plants are built, over a 30-year period they would add [\\$1 trillion to the province's GDP](#), more than \$100 billion in provincial tax revenue and draw \$175 billion in new investment into the province.

Critically, this increased uncertainty isn't just an issue for project proponents but also for First Nations communities. The [Tsilhqot'in decision](#) made it very clear that the Crown could override Aboriginal rights and allow a project to proceed on Aboriginal title land without the consent of the First Nation; but only if the government deems the project in the greater public interest. In other words, there's a chance that if the Lax Kw'alaams band is able to prove title (an inherent right to land or territory) on the project site, the LNG facility would proceed without their consent. And without an agreement between the First Nation and Pacific NorthWest LNG, despite [Premier's Clark recent announcement](#), this scenario would leave the First Nation out of potential revenues and jobs generated from the project.

This scenario could be avoided, and current uncertainty could be mitigated, if the provincial government clarifies which projects, if any, are in the greater public interest, and therefore, can override Aboriginal rights.

Apparently, the provincial government believes a [negotiated settlement](#) between Pacific NorthWest LNG and Lax Kw'alaams First Nation is within reach. But if the deal falls through, the province will have to weigh Aboriginal rights against potential benefits from the LNG project.

So clarity is key. First Nations in B.C., like the Lax Kw'alaams band, deserve greater clarity on what, if any, projects trump Aboriginal title rights. Companies looking to invest in B.C. deserve greater clarity on the willingness of the government to support projects on Aboriginal title land -- without the consent of First Nations. And all British Columbians should know whether or not LNG projects, that promise to add a trillion dollars to the province's GDP, will come to fruition.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/ravina-bains/lng-first-nations-consultation_b_7422890.html

Reconciliation includes recognizing aboriginal land title, says lawyer

Izaak de Rijcke's talk in Whitehorse attracts large turnout

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 10, 2015 7:40 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 11, 2015 8:26 AM CT



Izaak de Rijcke's lecture in Whitehorse Tuesday night at the Yukon Arts Centre attracted a large turnout. (Nancy Thomson/CBC)

Reconciliation is inseparable from recognition of aboriginal land title, says a law professor from Ontario who gave a lecture in Whitehorse Tuesday night.

More than 200 people turned out to hear Izaak de Rijcke's talk on aboriginal title and existing property law regimes, including a 'who's who' of prominent Yukoners including lawyers, chiefs, land claims negotiators and Yukon Supreme Court Justice Ron Veale.

De Rijcke practises real estate law in Ontario and has taught at Osgoode Hall law school.

De Rijcke said property law is complicated at any level, with many overlapping interests, but aboriginal title is the "unique product of the historic relationship between the Crown and people from different aboriginal groups."

He told the audience that reconciliation is inseparable from recognition of aboriginal title.

'Equal status'

"The right of control over the land means that governments and others seeking to use the land require more than just consent of the holders of aboriginal title," he said.

"They need to partner with, they need to recognize a person at the table having equal status with themselves."

De Rijcke warned that governments which don't recognize underlying rights risk being "continually blindsided by court rulings which tell us to recognize and respect First Nations' claims."

He added that the courts have specified that title confers rights not just to fee simple ownership, but a right to decide how the land will be used - planning - and management of resources.

De Rijcke concluded that it's time for Canada to consider an approach to land that would allow different systems to coexist over the same land base.

Positive reception

People who attended the lecture said they appreciated the message.

Former NDP MP Audrey MacLaughlin said it's clear that "when provinces and territories decide to challenge these things in the courts, they lose. And as taxpayers, we pay. So we listen, we listen to supreme court law, we listen to what experts say, and let's just get on with doing it."

Carl Freisen, a Canada land surveyor, said it makes him think about what's going to happen in Yukon, B.C. and western Canada.

"Are we going to be able to talk in a reasonable manner and find those solutions together? Hopefully we can do that," he said.

Mike Smith, regional vice-chief with the Assembly of First Nations, said reconciliation and aboriginal title do fit hand in glove.

"He's talking about acceptance. Do you accept First Nations have title? Do you accept that First Nations have interest? Once you do, you can have reconciliation."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/reconciliation-includes-recognizing-aboriginal-land-title-says-lawyer-1.3108654>

Special Topic: Residential Schools

The Canadian Government Systematically Tortured And Abused Aboriginal Children For 100 Years

by [Beenish Ahmed](#) Posted on June 5, 2015 at 9:59 am



A young Aboriginal girl wears traditional clothing during an event by Manito Abhee celebrating National Aboriginal Day in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Tuesday, June 23, 2011.

Mary Courchene became so ashamed of her heritage while attending one of nearly 150 residential schools for Aboriginal Canadians that she developed a hatred for her own parents and could hardly stand to spend a summer at home with them.

“I hated them because they were Indians,” she [recalled](#). “I looked at my dad and...I said, ‘From now on we speak only English in this house.’”

Her father turned from her with tears in his eyes and told her mother in his native language, Ojibway, “I guess we’ll never speak to this little girl again. [I] don’t know her.”

This process of “cultural genocide” was one major objective behind the Canadian government’s support of residential schools for Aboriginal children, according to a damning [report](#) released by the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Tuesday.

The children’s cultural identity was not the only thing that suffered at the schools — First Nation, Métis, and Inuit children were brutalized through physical abuse, sexual violence, derogatory language, meager food, and a deliberate attempt to rid them of their cultural identities. The commission found that at least 3,201 students died while at the schools, often because of abuse and neglect.

So not only were we going to church to pray, and go to catechism, but we were also going to church ’cause they were giving us candy for touching them.

Families were often coerced by police into sending their children to these schools as part of a policy, intended, “not to educate them, but primarily to break their link to their culture and identity,” [according](#) to the commission’s findings. The schools functioned first under the purview of various churches, and then with the support of the government from 1883 until 1998.

“The Canadian government pursued this policy of cultural genocide because it wished to divest itself of its legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources,” the commission stated in a summary of its findings. “If every Aboriginal person had been ‘absorbed into the body politic,’ there would be no reserves, no treaties, and no Aboriginal rights.”

The commission, which is made up of three members, including two Aboriginal men, conducted interviews with more than 6,750 former students, as well as their parents and community members, as part of a six-year investigation into Canada’s residential school system.

While some students describe fond memories and encouraging teachers, many more describe an abysmal academic environment. Many students only realized just how inadequate their education was when they transferred to public schools. When Victoria McIntosh left Fort Alexander residency school for public school, she said, “I could hardly read and write.”

“I knew that I wasn’t, you know, like, stupid, or, or dumb, or anything like that, it just, I didn’t know how to read and write, and I didn’t get a lot of these things,” she said.

The testimony the commission has included in its report offers a grim picture of what life was like for children — many of whom were no more than five years old when sent to the schools. Many said that they went to bed hungry on a daily basis and were fed rancid food that was sometimes writhing with maggots.

Students also described being hit with yardsticks, leather straps, steaming pipes and much else.

Raynie Tuckanow who attended Qu’Appelle School said he saw a staff member tie up a fellow student before sexually violating him. “They put him out the window with a broomstick handle shoved up his ass. And I witnessed that.”

“There was a little canteen in the church, and the priest[s] would sell us candies,” Elaine Durocher, who attended a Roman Catholic school in Kamsack, Saskatchewan recalled. “Well, after they got to know us, they started making us touch their penis for candy. So not only were we going to church to pray, and go to catechism, but we were also going to church ‘cause they were giving us candy for touching them.”

Many of the students began to wet the bed regularly because of the fear they lived with — and felt a painful longing to return home, though many were denied visits from their

family. Even gifts their parents sent them were confiscated if they contained anything that represented their cultural heritage.

“Homesickness was your constant companion besides hunger, loneliness, and fear,” Paul Dixon, who was a student at residential schools in Québec and Ontario, said. “But all that time, you know, you know we had to weep silently. You were not allowed to cry, and we were in fear that we, as nobody to hear us, you know. If one child was caught crying, eh, oh, everybody was in trouble. You’d get up, and you’d get up at the real fastest way. Now, they hit you between your legs, or pull you out of bed by the hair, even if it was a top bunk.”

“The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history,” Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper [said](#) in 2008, but the commission asserted that such apologies are insufficient.

In its report, commission members noted the continued impact of the schools on Aboriginal communities:

The health of generations of Aboriginal children was undermined by inadequate diets, poor sanitation, overcrowded conditions, and a failure to address the tuberculosis crisis that was ravaging the country’s Aboriginal community. There should be little wonder that Aboriginal health status remains far below that of the general population. The over-incarceration and over-victimization of Aboriginal people also have links to a system that subjected Aboriginal children to punitive discipline and exposed them to physical and sexual abuse.

Without efforts to reform what it described as “policies and programs are still based on faded notions of assimilation,” the commission said reconciliation will be difficult.

It put forth 94 recommendations including an overhaul of the country’s child welfare system for Aboriginal children and the inclusion of a promise to honor treaties with indigenous peoples as part of the country’s citizenship oath.

“Seven generations of children went through these schools and we have said that coming to terms with this past, in a way that allows for there to be a much more mutually respectable relationship is going to take, perhaps, generations as well,” Justice Murray Sinclair, who heads the commission, [told](#) NPR. He added:

We’ve said that it was through the use of education that we really got into this mess to begin with, but we really believe that the use of education is the key to reconciliation in the future. Children being educated in this country need to be educated to completely understand the role that Aboriginal people played in the development of this nation and that they were not the heathens, savages, pagans, and inferior people that the textbooks in our schools have portrayed them [as]. That message needs to change and Aboriginal children need to be given the opportunity to establish their own sense of self-respect. I think that is the first step.

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2015/06/05/3666481/aboriginal-canada/>

Indigenous Leaders: TRC Report Calls for Action; Let's Take It

[ICTMN Staff](#)

6/4/15

Indigenous leaders greeted the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's summary report on residential schools with openness while urging all Canadians to embrace the findings and close the gap between aboriginals and those who came after.

"All Canadians are affected by the impacts of the Indian residential schools system and it is time to commit ourselves to reconciliation and action," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde in a statement after the June 2 release of the report, which took six years to compile and contains 94 recommendations for further action.

Although the last schools closed nearly 20 years ago, in a way the residential schools era is not over, he cautioned. The schools operated from the late 1800s through 1996, and many of the 150,000 students who were taken from their families are still scarred.

"The impacts of residential schools are still with us and are contributing to the gap in the quality of life between First Nations and Canadians," Bellegarde said. "We must close that gap. The schools operated on the assumption that First Nations cultures and languages had to be eradicated and profoundly damaged the relationship between First Nations and Canada. We must repair that relationship. Action is long overdue, and I believe that the Government of Canada must formally commit to working with First Nations and engaging Canadians in implementing the Commission's calls to action."

Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy also called for a "fundamental restructuring" of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and non-Natives.

"Recognizing and respecting sovereignty of Indigenous Nations is the foundation for reconciliation, and all Canadians and levels of Canadian governments must do their part," Beardy said in a statement from the Chiefs of Ontario. "Reconciliation can only begin when Canada recognizes its current and historical disregard for indigenous sovereignty, and when all Canadians call on the federal government move to work with us to restore a relationship based on mutual respect and recognition of our sovereignty."

He lauded the 7,000 witnesses who had come forward to testify either publicly or in private at events held around the country and said that they cannot be abandoned in the wake of the report's release.

“Thousands of survivors showed exemplary leadership and courage in coming forward with their stories,” Beardy said. “And with this truth, it is our responsibility as indigenous leadership to carry these stories with us as we work to reconcile the relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Nations. This responsibility extends beyond leadership, and perhaps most importantly rests with all Canadian citizens who have a have a role in keeping federal and provincial leadership accountable in the process of reconciliation, and ensuring these governments hold up to their commitments.”

Chief Gord Peters of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) said that education would pave the way toward healing.

“To this day, it amazes me how few Canadians know about residential schools or the fact that the last school wasn’t shut down until 1996,” he said in a statement. “We are not talking about a chapter of history that is generations behind us, but a practice that came to a close less than 20 years ago—the same year that brought us eBay.”

Inuit and Métis leaders wanted to see the concerns of their respective groups addressed more directly. Terry Audla, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), put his full support behind the report but said that there were some gaps when it came to his constituents.

“I call on the Government of Canada to uphold the honor of the Crown and take immediate action to recognize survivors of residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Inuit region of Nunatsiavut,” Audla said in a statement from ITK. “I call on all parties to the Settlement Agreement to continue to pursue full recognition for these survivors until we have fulfilled our collective promise to them.”

Métis National Council President Clément Chartier, for his part, said the report had excluded the survivors of Métis residential schools, and in general had not addressed the concerns of this indigenous group of people descended from settlers and First Nations.

“Other than a few of the recommendations that include Métis in proposed actions, we are treated as an afterthought,” Chartier said in a statement. “Little thought was given or advice provided to deal with the exclusion of Métis residential schools from federal settlements agreements.”

All agreed, though, that the report marks the beginning of a way forward, but cautioned that it needed to spark action, not just sit on a shelf. Peters alluded to the 1996 Royal Commission, which held out a host of recommendations that never got implemented.

“Canada cannot allow these recommendations to collect dust as was seen with the 1996 commission,” Peters said. “This as a second chance to make things right, and Canada must seize it.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/04/indigenous-leaders-trc-report-calls-action-lets-take-it-160615>

Harper must ask Pope Francis for aboriginal abuse apology

Waterloo Region Record

By [Tim Harper](#), Jun 06, 2015

Stephen Harper can only have one item at the top of his agenda when he visits the Vatican next week.

The prime minister must formally invite Pope Francis to travel to Canada to apologize for the role of the Roman Catholic Church in this country's shameful residential schools era.

It is a demand of the commission and it has the backing of church leaders in this country.

Harper's position — that he will wait for the final report of the commission later this year before reacting — looks like a bid to move this off his plate until after a federal election.

But there is no need to wait on this request.

The Roman Catholic Church has often appeared to be, first and foremost, consumed with protecting the Roman Catholic Church and initially church leaders here seemed headed along that same path when Justice Murray Sinclair called for an apology from Pope Francis, on Canadian soil, within a year.

They equivocated, explaining it was up to the church in Canada, not the Pope, to deal with this, that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission didn't understand the decentralized nature of the church or the autonomous nature of the bishops, that the demand was "bold" and putting a deadline on such a gesture made it that much more difficult.

But in a later conversation, Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, who chairs the committee of Catholic entities that ran residential schools, was much more conciliatory.

It would be "very appropriate" for Harper to issue the invitation, Pettipas, archbishop of Grouard-McLennan in Grand Prairie, Alta., told me. A papal visit requires a government invitation.

"It would be totally in place for Stephen Harper to invite the Holy Father to come to Canada and I wouldn't be at all surprised if that would happen," he said. "It would be the right thing to do."

High-ranking Catholic officials in Canada have apologized to residential school survivors as far back as 1991 and have repeated regrets at various levels over the years.

But a series of statements by high-ranking officials have left a "patchwork" of apologies or statements of regret that few survivors or church members may know exist, Sinclair said in his report.

"Roman Catholics in Canada and across the globe look to the Pope as their spiritual and moral leader," he writes. "Therefore it has been disappointing to survivors that the Pope has not yet made a clear and emphatic public apology in Canada for the abuses perpetrated in Catholic-run residential schools across this country."

The United, Anglican and Presbyterian churches have apologized through moderators or primates who spoke for the highest level of the church.

The papal apology was not raised during a meeting between Sinclair and Harper Tuesday, but only because Sinclair was unaware of Harper's travel plans.

Harper's office will not discuss the meeting between the prime minister and the pontiff.

Pettipas accompanied former Assembly of First Nations grand chief Phil Fontaine to a private audience with Pope Benedict in 2009 when the pontiff offered his "sorrow" at the anguish caused to aboriginal children in Canada, including Fontaine.

Benedict offered his "sympathy and prayerful solidarity." He did not apologize.

Fontaine, at the time, said the absence of the word "apology" did not diminish the moment and Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast told the Catholic Register he did believe Benedict's statement to be an apology.

Prendergast sounded grudging in his acceptance of the "striking demand" made by Sinclair.

"I guess every pope has to do it," he said, then wondered whether the same demand will be made of the next pontiff and "what will be the next demand?"

There is already talk of Pope Francis visiting Canada in 2017, but Sinclair specifically called for a visit within a year.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has pointed to Benedict's 2010 letter of apology issued for the church's abuse of children in Ireland. In the letter, distributed through that country's Catholic churches, the then-pope said he was "truly sorry" for the betrayal of trust and the violation of dignity.

But there is one difference. Benedict did not issue the apology in person, in Ireland.

Pettipas said he realizes the "mystique of the Holy See and the papacy" means we keep returning to the idea of the Pope travelling to express regrets.

Harper should do all he can to make it happen.

Even before the Pope apologizes, there is one more step for all the churches — ante up, as Sinclair demands, for permanent programs for healing and reconciliation projects, and culture and language revitalization projects.

Tim Harper is a news services columnist who writes on national affairs.

Direct Link: <http://www.therecord.com/opinion-story/5663840-harper-must-ask-pope-francis-for-aboriginal-abuse-apology/>

LaFleche: First Nations suffering no mystery

By [Grant LaFleche](#), The Standard

Friday, June 5, 2015 6:13:32 EDT PM

My grandfather was an aboriginal.

In truth, Fred LaFleche is mostly a cypher to me. I have no real memory of the man. I know only snippets of his life from the stories my father told me.

I know he was a brilliant mathematician (a trait I did not inherit) whose father forbade him from going to Oxford University, even though he earned a scholarship. He was a good musician who played trombone (that did get passed down through the genes.) He was a test pilot during the Second World War who chased German U-boats out of the St. Lawrence River.

I saw two photos of him I growing up — one in his air force uniform, bearing a striking resemblance to Humphrey Bogart (he actually took to signing autographs as a lark.)

The other was of him as a boy, looking rather unhappy wearing a little sailor outfit.

The thing I knew the most about my grandfather was that he was an alcoholic. Whatever potent intellectual gifts he possessed, his demons and the bottle were what defined much of his life.

Although my father romanticizes him to a degree, the pain the man caused my dad was obvious to me even as a child.

Growing up, I had unanswered questions. What would drive a man of such obvious talents into an addiction that would ultimately kill him?

Part of the answer would be uncovered accidentally some 20 years ago. A relative from Edmonton sent my dad a pile of old family photos — slices of a family history we did not know existed.

There was that shot of the sailor outfit. A few of Fred as a young man. And one curious photo of a familiar young boy with two adults. A First Nations family, by all appearances. The boy and his father sporting long hair in braids.

On the back was written a single sentence: “Fred with his parents.”

The boy was my grandfather.

And his parents were not the people I knew to be my great-grandparents.

The details are murky. No definitive paper trail was there, but the photos told the story in broad strokes.

When he was young, my grandfather was taken from his birth parents, who were likely Cree from what we could tell, to be Christianized in a white home.

His hair was cut, and he was dressed in that sailor outfit.

Although I can only deduce so much about his early life, it did not appear my grandfather was subjected to the horrors of Canadian residential schools.

He nonetheless was part of the concerted effort in Canada to erase our First Nations by systematic cultural extinction.

He was part of the large phenomena Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission has labelled “cultural genocide.”

I can only imagine the emotional torment he experienced as a boy and the mental scars he carried as a man, and the role they likely played in his drinking.

The tragic ripples of his life directly affected my father and informed much about how he, for good and for ill, lived his own life.

How much worse then, how much more potent, are the generational ripples extended from those imprisoned in residential schools?

This week’s report from the commission on residential schools is chilling. Its conclusions, stark and unavoidable.

Too many of our First Nations brothers and sisters live with the very real legacy of the disgraceful treatment of their parents and grandparents.

We still wear that legacy as a national shame, not because it happened but because we have done so little to repair the damage. Because we have willfully chosen to ignore the values we claim to cherish as Canadians.

If you are ignorant of our own history, the commission's report is a good place to start educating yourself.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People in 1996 should have been the wakeup call, but we chose to consign it to dusty, forgotten library shelves.

Our shame will be compounded if we do the same with this latest report.

We cannot change the cruelty of the past. But we can act in the here and now. I submit it is our duty as Canadians, as inheritors of all this country is — the good and the bad — to do so.

The problems faced by many of our First Nations communities are serious, with roots that run deep into our shared past. They will not be overcome unless we work with them to implement solutions.

To do nothing is to embrace indifference in the face of human suffering, and ignore the past and disregard the future. It is to passively allow more lives to be shaped like my grandfather's and the ripples that come from them.

I am not sure I could live with that.

Can you?

Direct Link: <http://www.lfpres.com/2015/06/05/lafleche-first-nations-suffering-no-mystery>

Blame game doesn't help First Nations

By [John Snobelen](#), *Toronto Sun*

First posted: Friday, June 05, 2015 07:23 PM EDT | Updated: Friday, June 05, 2015 10:41 PM EDT



A group of people marched from the University of Winnipeg to Thunderbird House in Winnipeg, after hearing the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings on June 2, 2015. (Chris Procylo/Winnipeg Sun)

Way back when I toiled as Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources, I had a rather optimistic view on First Nations.

I thought that fixing the perpetual problems that plague indigenous communities should be a top priority.

The challenges were well known.

High unemployment. Dramatically lower life expectancy. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Drug abuse. High rates of incarceration. High rates of teen suicide.

The list of social issues persists generation after generation.

We need something to break the cycle.

In my naivety, I thought government should engage the issue in a dramatically new way.

I heard from a lot of dedicated First Nations leaders.

I visited reserves across the province.

I came to the conclusion First Nations issues cried out for not just improvement, but change.

In my view, no amount of cash or bureaucratic engagement would or will alter the future for the next generation.

We need a new model of engagement.

I also had the wise council of people who had previously dented their ax on these issues.

They said the First Nations file was a quagmire of blame, entitlement, constitutional wrangling and bureaucratic overlap.

Maybe they were right.

It seems every politician who touches the First Nations' file gets burned.

As Ontario opposition leader, Dalton McGuinty had a field day blaming then-premier Mike Harris for responding too quickly to the illegal occupation of a provincial park and the subsequent tragic death of a protester.

But when McGuinty became premier, he was burned by the occupation of private land in Caledonia and his government's failure to enforce the law.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was on the side of the angels in apologizing for the sad history of residential schools in Canada.

But his bold initiative to invest in the education of First Nations children died in a torrent of indigenous politics.

This week the commission Harper sent out to hear the stories of residential schools reported.

It wasn't a fact-finding mission.

Harper asked three people with strong links to the First Nations to report on the truth.

The truth they found was not surprising.

Two hundred years ago the government of what became Canada was certain indigenous people were doomed if they couldn't assimilate.

That conclusion drove a policy that took 150,000 indigenous children from their communities and placed them in the supposedly caring hands of religious schools.

It was a tragic blunder. Thousands of children died. The religious institutions allowed unspeakable crimes.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard stories from those who felt the effects of a terrible, government-initiated attack on the cultures of the First Nations.

Committing those stories to a permanent record, which will, when it is released, fill six volumes, is a useful thing.

The recommendations of the commission are, sadly, not.

The 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission range from the obvious, like allowing name changes, to the ludicrous, like changing the oath of citizenship.

But the theme of all these recommendations is familiar — more money, more bureaucracy, no substantive change.

To find the change we need the commission should have looked to the First Nations communities that are doing well, often without government help, and learned from their efforts.

But, like most commissions, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was in the business of blame.

All of which sets the stage for the next opportunistic and naive politician to get burned.

Liberal leader Justin Trudeau has endorsed the commission's recommendations in full. Good luck with that.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/06/05/blame-game-doesnt-help-first-nations>

Justice Murray Sinclair's challenge for Canada as it seeks reconciliation

JOHN IBBITSON

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jun. 05, 2015 8:14PM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Jun. 06, 2015 8:20AM EDT

“We cried when they cried. We laughed when they laughed.” Justice Murray Sinclair is reaching the end of a very long journey, with his own personal share of pain, and with a challenge for all non-native Canadians.

Reconcile with the First Nations among you, share sovereignty over the land – or watch as that sovereignty is taken from you.

Over the years, Manitoba's first aboriginal judge has been involved in proceedings that would test anyone's spiritual strength: a commission on aboriginal justice in Manitoba; an inquest into the death of 12 infants at a Winnipeg hospital; and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which over six years heard from more than 7,000 survivors of mental, physical and sexual abuse at residential schools.

Perhaps the most wrenching moment came when the TRC, as it's called, was well under way. Mr. Sinclair's elderly uncle asked to see him. The uncle had been to a residential

school with Mr. Sinclair's father, who had abandoned Mr. Sinclair when his mother died – he was only one year old – descending into a life plagued by alcohol, mental illness and homelessness.

The uncle, who had been sexually abused at the school, “made a passing remark that my father had experienced the same kind of abuse he had experienced. I was caught a little off-guard by that,” said Mr. Sinclair, in the calm, measured tone with which he describes any situation. He now believes that this father's demons arose from that abuse.

Mr. Sinclair's grandmother, who knew something of what had happened, pulled her children out of the school and left the reserve. Later, she took over the raising of her grandchildren, and she raised them well. Mr. Sinclair was class valedictorian at his high school (and athlete of the year), went to university and law school, specialized in aboriginal issues as a lawyer and was appointed in 1988 to the bench.

He was a natural choice for the commission, which was established in 2008 in the wake of the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement with a mandate to tell the full story of what happened in those schools. But as a father of four children, he found the emotional strain of the inquest into the children who died after cardiac surgery in Winnipeg had left him drained, and he declined.

The original commission, however, fell apart over infighting among the three commissioners, and Chuck Strahl, who was then minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, asked Mr. Sinclair to reconsider. The hiring committee needed someone indigenous, familiar with native culture; someone with knowledge of the law, who could write, research and organize.

“Someone who could carry the day,” as Mr. Strahl put it. “I think he realized when we came back to him the second time around that there wasn't a long list of people [who met the criteria], that he was top of the list. ... It was a pivotal moment in First Nations-Canada relations.”

Mr. Sinclair said yes, reluctantly. “He wasn't seeking the headlines. He was properly hesitant, if you will,” Mr. Strahl said. “There was some question about whether he could get things on the rails or not, and it turned out we hired the right guy.”

The commission heard from survivors and those who had taught them. It took the Conservative government to court to force it to locate and release archival documents. But mostly the commissioners listened and wept and laughed as they chronicled the stories of survivors.

Residential school survivor Viv Ketchum did not appear before the commission, but spoke with Mr. Sinclair at length at a sunrise ceremony. She was impressed by “that grandfather authority figure that he is.” Mr. Sinclair is 64. “He has all the empathy that's missing from some other political figures that are involved in this issue.”

She left the encounter knowing “that I was being listened to and that I was not invisible.”

This week the commission released its first report, with 94 recommendations for achieving a full reconciliation between Canada’s native and non-native peoples. The complete report, totalling some two million words, will follow later this year.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau has promised to implement every one of those recommendations if he becomes prime minister. Thomas Mulcair promises that an NDP government will negotiate on a nation-to-nation level to prioritize and implement the recommendations. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been non-committal, as Mr. Sinclair expected.

“We didn’t write this report for this government,” he said. “We wrote this report for all governments including this government. We expect there will be other opportunities to talk with people when governments change, and governments always change.”

Of all the recommendations, the one that takes precedence for Mr. Sinclair calls for a new royal proclamation between the government of Canada and the First Nations, which would include implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Such a proclamation would strengthen the sovereignty of First Nations, while weakening the authority of federal and provincial governments.

For Mr. Sinclair, such a proclamation “reconciles the sovereignty of the Crown and the sovereignty of the aboriginal people into the future, so that aboriginal people are not simply treated as another minority group in society, but people who have original rights that need to be respected going forward.”

Many Canadians will balk at this, not least because it would grant an effective veto to First Nations over the use of Crown land. There would be very little mining or forestry or fishing without First Nations approval. Nor would oil and gas be extracted or pipelines built. There are 330,000 First Nations living on reserve, in a country of 36 million people.

But “the central truth is that there is a relationship between aboriginal people and everyone who has come here, from 1492 to today,” Mr. Sinclair said. “And it will always be a politically volatile question until there are processes and institutions in place that address that.”

Many of the people who come to Canada today are from developing nations that were themselves at one time oppressed by colonial powers. “They will be able to say, if we let them, ‘I had nothing to do with that, so therefore I don’t need to worry about it,’” he said. “But on the other hand, everyone coming here has a responsibility to the future.”

That is one reason why the commission wants the residential school experience to be incorporated into school curricula, into citizenship guides, into law and journalism programs, into the very fabric of national life.

And Mr. Sinclair points out that Canada's robust immigration policies may mean that visible minorities could be a majority in 50 years' time. Those who see Canada as a nation founded by French and English settlers and inhabited by their descendants may one day know what it's like to struggle to preserve one's culture and heritage.

"You are going to be the aboriginal people of the future," he predicted. "So let's talk about how you are treating aboriginal people today."

Mr. Sinclair is well aware that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission could join all the other commissions and reports and studies whose recommendations have gone unfulfilled, that its two million words could be "consigned to dark spaces on dark shelves in dark corners of dark libraries." That is why the commission wants to see a National Council for Reconciliation established to monitor implementation of the report.

"Everything we do going forward should be based on the question of how we achieve reconciliation," Mr. Sinclair said. And he does mean everything: every action by every government, at every level, including municipalities.

And for those who would shrug off such demands, the good judge has an observation: For three decades, since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted, the Supreme Court has been incrementally affirming and expanding the sovereign rights of First Nations. Mr. Sinclair is only one of many who believe the courts are warning Ottawa that it must meaningfully negotiate a relationship with Canada's aboriginal people or have that relationship imposed by the court.

Would that relationship include a constitutional right of First Nations to a veto over the use of Crown land? "I don't see how they could advance that issue any further without taking that step," he replied.

For now, Mr. Sinclair is concentrating on wrapping up the commission's work, which includes shepherding that final, multi-volume report into print. Then he must decide if he wants to go back on the court.

This is unlikely. To be a judge is to be silent outside the court, "and that would be a real challenge," Mr. Sinclair confessed. He might retire and advocate for native rights full-time. And "there's a book that might pop out of my head."

Murray Sinclair, it appears, is just getting started.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/justice-murray-sinclairs-challenge-for-canada-as-it-seeks-reconciliation/article24833535/>

Kathleen Wynne says federal response to residential school study 'disappointing'

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released 94 recommendations Tuesday along with a summary of its conclusions, including its description of a “cultural genocide” and the estimated deaths of more than 6,000 children.

Ontario's premier is criticizing the Harper government's response to recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into residential schools. Kathleen Wynne says there is 'no excuse' not to address aboriginal concerns.

By: [Rob Ferguson](#) Queen's Park Bureau, Published on Sat Jun 06 2015

COLLINGWOOD, ONT.—The Harper government fell short in its response to the aboriginal Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Premier Kathleen Wynne said as her provincial Liberals prepare to help their federal cousins in a fall election.

“I think it’s disappointing,” Wynne said Saturday of Ottawa’s reaction to a damning report last week that described deplorable treatment of aboriginal children in residential schools as a “cultural genocide” replete with deaths, physical and sexual abuse. Commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair made [94 recommendations](#) in his [preliminary report](#), including a complete overhaul of relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

[Prime Minister Stephen Harper](#)’s minister of native affairs, Bernard Valcourt, said the federal government will support a fund to promote awareness of what happened in residential schools, boost public understanding and establish a national centre for truth and reconciliation.

The Harper government also said it has taken a number of steps to help aboriginals since the prime minister issued an apology in 2008 for their treatment over the years.

Wynne pushed for more, including more federal help to provide clean drinking water on Northern Ontario reserves often plagued by boil-water orders.

“There no excuse for any government in this country, including the federal government, not to take action to correct those relationships that have been so damaging,” Wynne told reporters after a speech to about 900 party activists gathered at a resort for their annual meeting.



Kathleen Wynne, shown here in April, began her speech to the Ontario Liberal annual general meeting on Saturday by acknowledging the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, saying her party must work to build a better relationship with First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

She departed from the text to take a shot at new Progressive Conservative [Leader Patrick Brown](#), saying he won the job with little talk of what his policies would be and joked that Ontarians will have to wait for him to “evolve.”

That was a reference to Brown supporter Rick Nicholls, MPP for Chatham—Kent—Essex and a creationist who blurted in the legislature this winter that Ontario should stop teaching evolution in schools.

Wynne easily passed a leadership review with 95-per-cent support a year after winning a majority government and despite police investigations into Liberal conduct in a Sudbury byelection, deleted emails on power plant cancellations and questionable business practices at the [ORNGE air ambulance service](#).

The attack on Harper and shots at new Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown were a distraction from about 400 protesters outside — mostly teachers — frustrated with slow progress in contract talks and furious the government is selling a 60-per-cent stake in Hydro One.

They briefly marched on a Blue Mountain conference centre, chanting, “don’t legislate, negotiate,” a reference to a law ordering striking high school teachers in Peel, Durham and Sudbury back to work, while Wynne spoke. They were gone shortly after she finished.

The premier acknowledged that Liberal party members approached her over the weekend with concerns about the [Hydro One](#) sale, which Brown’s PCs and the New Democrats oppose, with NDP Leader Andrea Horwath demanding a referendum.

“I’m the first to admit this is a difficult decision. So if it’s a difficult decision for me, then obviously it’s going to be an issue for many of the people in the party,” Wynne said.

The sale is needed to raise \$9 billion to invest in public transit and to pay down electricity debt while avoiding raising taxes, she added.

“There weren’t other options that were going to be fair to everyone across the province.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/06/06/kathleen-wynne-says-federal-response-to-residential-school-study-disappointing.html>

Global Voices: We need reconciliation — let’s take hand that’s offered

Marc and Craig Kielburger / Times Colonist
June 7, 2015 04:37 AM

Day after day, victims of apartheid recounted their stories of unimaginable suffering. The sheer weight of horror drove Archbishop Desmond Tutu to break down and weep.

In the 1990s, we watched with admiration as Archbishop Desmond Tutu united his nation after apartheid through a truth and reconciliation process. It was a communal affair — the hearings were televised near-daily and millions tuned in. The hearings were discussed over water coolers.

When Tutu wept, blacks and whites across South Africa cried with him. It was a country-wide catharsis that helped South Africa transition more peacefully.

As Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission releases its final report about the residential school system for aboriginal children we wonder, where is Canada’s catharsis? With little media coverage up until the release of the final report, and even less public engagement, Canada has had no such emotionally transformative moment.

Tutu taught us that where there has been harm to a group of people within a nation, reconciliation comes from people, not acts of parliament.

And Canada needs reconciliation. The last residential school only closed in 1996. All aboriginal communities still suffer from their impact.

So what can Canadians do to foster reconciliation?

Struggling to answer this question, we turned to aboriginal leaders Justice Murray Sinclair, chairman of the TRC, and Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations. And for a younger voice, Wab Kinew, First Nations musician, author and media personality.

Their response was unified: Non-aboriginals need to be educated and to reach out.

Launched in 2008, the TRC laid bare the sordid 200-year history of Canada's residential schools for aboriginal children.

According to a newly-revealed estimate by the TRC, 6,000 aboriginal died in residential schools. The TRC recorded the stories of 6,750 survivors and their children and grandchildren.

It's a history that Sinclair says Canadians have been taught very little about. And much of what we did learn in school was misinformation based on stereotypes. When Craig defended Thomas King's *Inconvenient Indian* on the annual national book debate *Canada Reads*, we were shocked to discover how little we really knew—like the fact there were laws in place up to 1961 that required aboriginals to give up their status if they wanted to vote.

We're pleased to see change happening. Across Canada, youth are increasingly learning about these issues in school. But what about adults? "The challenge of education lies with the older generation," says Kinew.

It's not hard to be better informed, if you're willing to put in the time. You can watch the videos of survivor testimony on the Commission website, and read *The Inconvenient Indian* or first-person accounts such as *They called me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School* (Talonbooks, 2012). And movies such as Jeff Barnaby's 2013 film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* capture the aboriginal experience of residential schools.

Bellegarde suggests we all reach out to interact and learn about the aboriginal nations who shaped history in our communities. Even in big cities such as Toronto or Montreal, there's a reserve within 100 kilometres of most neighbourhoods. Many reserves, he tells us, welcome requests to visit and learn about their community and culture.

There are 117 aboriginal friendship centres in Canada, from Victoria to St. John's, where you can learn about local aboriginal peoples, discover events you can participate in, and even volunteer opportunities where you can help out.

"How do you build a relationship? By participating," says Bellegarde.

Without mutual understanding we can never achieve reconciliation. In sharing their painful stories through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, aboriginal peoples aren't trying to make us feel guilty.

They are reaching out a hand to us.

If Canada truly wants reconciliation — if the TRC process is to mean anything — the responsibility lies now with all of us to take that hand. Let's make the effort to learn about and understand the people with whom we share this land.

Brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger founded a platform for social change that includes the international charity, Free The Children, the social enterprise Me to We and the youth empowerment movement We Day.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/life/global-voices-we-need-reconciliation-let-s-take-hand-that-s-offered-1.1960789#sthash.DNLZNd3b.dpuf>

Commission should have called for an end to Indian Act

By [Tom Brodbeck](#), *Winnipeg Sun*

First posted: Sunday, June 07, 2015 01:45 PM CDT | Updated: Sunday, June 07, 2015 02:17 PM CDT



A group of people marched from the University of Winnipeg to Thunderbird House in Winnipeg, after hearing the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings on June 2, 2015. (Chris Procaulo/Winnipeg Sun)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has missed a golden opportunity.

And it's unfortunate they have. Because until Canada gets to the root causes of the economic hopelessness, the family breakdowns, the addictions and the disenfranchisement plaguing hundreds of aboriginal communities, nothing will improve for First Nations in this country.

The TRC and its commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair released a summary of its final report Tuesday into Canada's residential schools. Its six-year investigation has produced corroborating evidence of physical and sexual abuse, institutionalized child neglect, higher than normal mortality rates in schools, and horrific government-directed assimilation tactics.

The report confirms much of what we already knew or suspected about the federal government's apartheid-like assimilation policies and how they were driven by a

European sense of racial superiority. The TRC's work was critically important to ensure Canadians have a full understanding of their history.

But among the commission's 94 recommendations — some of which were good and some of which were not so good — there was one glaring omission. It was a deliberate omission because the commission obviously didn't want to open that can of worms. It's a can of worms not all leaders in the aboriginal community have found consensus on. But it's one this country will eventually have to deal with if it ever wants to see meaningful improvements in the lives of affected aboriginal people.

Not once in the commission's recommendations did they mention the federal Indian Act, the central obstacle that prevents First Nation communities from taking charge of their own lives and getting out from under the thumb of government. The Indian Act is a paternalistic piece of legislation that presumes aboriginal people aren't fit to make their own decisions, can't handle owning their own property, and are incapable of deciding among themselves who is and who is not a real "Indian."

Until it's repealed, or at least phased out over time, there's almost no chance of fixing the social and economic ills the commission identifies, including high rates of poverty, incarceration, victimization, poor health, and chronic joblessness.

The argument against repealing the Indian Act is no one knows what to replace it with. Other than constitutionally-protected treaties, there is no other legislative framework that provides First Nations with predictable funding, some form of political system, and a definition of a status Indian, no matter how arbitrary that definition may be.

But there are alternatives. The problem is neither the politicians, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the federal bureaucrats, nor many First Nations chiefs want to do the heavy lifting required to explore those alternatives. It's easier to stick with the status quo than to take risks that could lead to meaningful change. Besides, many First Nations chiefs and councils, as well as federal bureaucrats, benefit from the status quo, including good salaries and financial security. Some don't want to give that up, even if it means perpetuating the squalor and misery the Indian Act inflicts on so many rank-and-file First Nations people.

The alternatives can be found in places like the Nisga'a Nation in northern British Columbia. The Nisga'a negotiated their own treaty with government in the late 1990s and freed themselves from the shackles of the federal government in 2000. They no longer operate under the Indian Act, they make their own decisions under a municipal-like governance model, pay taxes, and can now even own their own homes and plots of land. It's revolutionary. They have emancipated themselves from the colonial rule that has kept their people down for so many generations.

"We are no longer beggars in our own land," Nisga'a president Joe Gosnell announced to a cheering crowd in Gitwinksihlkw, B.C., in 2000. "We are free to make our own mistakes, savour our own victories, and stand on our own feet."

This is an alternative to the Indian Act. It's not perfect and the Nisga'a have their problems, too. But it's a vast improvement over the Indian Act's reprehensible reserve system.

It's a shame and a lost opportunity that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission didn't recommend this course of action. Because in the long run, the entrenched problems that plague First Nations communities can only be solved through freedom and self-determination.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/06/07/commission-should-have-called-for-an-end-to-indian-act>

Mulcair demands PM ask Pope to apologize for church's role in residential schools



New research shows that residential school officials' ignorance about disease was a major contributor to the number of student deaths.

[Michelle Zilio](#), CTVNews.ca

Published Sunday, June 7, 2015 12:18PM EDT

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair is calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to ask the Pope to apologize on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church for its involvement in Canada's residential school system.

Mulcair made the comments in an interview with CTV's Question Period, days ahead of Harper's trip to Vatican City. The Prime Minister will meet with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, including Pope Francis, on Wednesday and Thursday.

"With all of the evidence that's now on the table, the Vatican should issue a formal apology for the Catholic Church's role in the residential schools. While the Prime

Minister is with the Pope, he should simply ask him if he's willing to issue that sort of an apology," said Mulcair.



Opposition Leader Tom Mulcair speaks with CTV's Question Period on June 7, 2015.

Last week, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its report on the residential school system. The report made 94 broad recommendations, touching on areas of child welfare, justice, health and education.

One of the recommendations called on the Pope to deliver an apology in Canada within a year of the report being issued. The TRC said the apology should resemble that of the 2010 apology issued to the Irish victims of sex abuse by priests.

Most churches involved in the residential schools have publicly apologize through their national offices, except for the Catholic Church, according to the Legacy of Hope Foundation, whose purpose is to raise awareness about the system.

According to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), there is a reason why the Catholic Church has not apologized. It blames the decentralized structure of the Catholic community in Canada.

It says the Catholic Church, as a whole, was not associated with the residential schools. But approximately 16 out of the 70 Catholic dioceses in Canada were, and each of them are "legally responsible" for their own actions.

However, the CCCC points out that it submitted a brief to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in November 1993, which said: "various types of abuse experienced at some residential schools have moved us to a profound examination of conscience as a Church."

And in 1991, the group issued a statement apologizing for the "pain, suffering and alienation that so many experienced" as a result of the residential school system.

In 2008, Harper also apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada for its role in the residential school system.

No commitment to all 94 recommendations

While Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said his party would adopt and implement all 94 recommendations from the TRC's report, the Conservatives and NDP have not.

Mulcair defended his party's decision to consider the recommendations in lockstep with First Nations before making any commitments.

"We're going to sit down with First Nations. We'll prioritize. We'll get to the subjects that they consider most important and we'll do it in order that they consider the most important," said Mulcair.

"It's not a matter of snapping your fingers and saying you're going to do all 94 at once. That's not realistic and it's not going to happen."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/mulcair-demands-pm-ask-pope-to-apologize-for-church-s-role-in-residential-schools-1.2410594>

David T. Barnard: The role of Canada's universities in reconciliation

[David T. Barnard](#)

Published on: June 7, 2015

Last Updated: June 7, 2015 7:00 AM EDT



Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde (in headdress) and Justice Murray Sinclair (in black suit), TRC commissioner, march during the Walk for Reconciliation on Sunday, May 31, 2015 in Gatineau.

Education has the power to transform the futures of individuals, their families and communities. However, the role of post-secondary institutions in advancing reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples extends much further. We need to look internally and make changes within the core of our institutions, engaging all university communities – administration, students, faculty, staff, donors and alumni.

As part of the recommendations it released at its closing ceremonies, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) called upon educational institutions to engage with indigenous communities and be leaders in reconciliation.

Foremost in this process is working with communities in creating opportunities for indigenous students. This includes collaborating with K-12 educators in building bridge programs that facilitate transition to universities and colleges and open the door for young students to pursue their chosen career paths. Working together, we can close the substantial gap in employment rates between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, a gap that is in large part due to the impacts of the residential school system and its intergenerational consequences.

Reconciliation requires societal change. Therefore, educating all students about the history and legacy of residential schools is crucial. Gaining this understanding is particularly significant in professional programs such as law, medicine, nursing, social work and education, where understanding the full and deep impacts that residential schools have had on survivors and their families is key to those professional approaches, and key to engaging respectfully with members of the indigenous community.

We begin to decolonize our universities by integrating indigenous knowledge, perspectives and worldviews into curricula, programs and services, and providing relevant training for those teaching and interacting with our students. When understanding of First Nation, Métis and other indigenous cultures is woven through all of our campuses, then real change will occur not only within the institution, but within the many areas of society that we reach.

Universities fundamentally influence think tanks and community dialogues that shape policy development. When we see wrongs and untruths, we must fight against them; where there are people facing social injustices, we must stand up for them; and where there is racism, we must challenge it.

At the University of Manitoba, where I serve as president, an early step in our university's journey toward reconciliation was particularly meaningful for me. In 2011, standing with colleagues, I addressed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Halifax to issue a statement of apology and reconciliation to residential school survivors. As the first university in Canada to issue such an apology, I hoped that the spirit of reconciliation in which it was offered might open a door to rebuilding some of the trust that had been lost in the educational system, due to the far-reaching damage caused by residential schools. While our university recognized that we cannot undo the shameful past, we committed to assist in building more awareness about the history and the impact that residential schools had on generations of individuals, families and communities.

Now, with the TRC having concluded its work and the sacred trust and responsibility for the care of the TRC archives being passed to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the University of Manitoba, there will be an opportunity for survivors, educators, students and all Canadians to engage with the archives, to learn

about the residential school system, and to foster a new relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

I invite all post-secondary institutions in this country to join us in our efforts at the NCTR and work together for our shared future.

David T. Barnard is the chair of Universities Canada and president and vice-chancellor of the University of Manitoba.

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/david-t-barnard-the-role-of-canadas-universities-in-reconciliation>

Local aboriginal community wants to see real action



Shawn Johnston is shown with his mom, Lila Bruyere, in 2014. He's worried the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report will "just sit on someone's desk."

Waterloo Region Record

By [Anam Latif](#)

WATERLOO — Shawn Johnston wants to see action.

The event co-ordinator at the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre at the University of Waterloo worries the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report released last week will fall to the wayside.

"When Murray Sinclair (TRC chair) said we need to move from apology to action, those words can't be any truer," Johnston said.

"I'm worried that this is another document that will just sit on someone's desk."

As the son of a residential school survivor, Johnston has experienced his share of intergenerational trauma.

The last residential school stopped operating in 1996 and 150,000 aboriginal children were put through the scarring experience over more than a century.

His mother, Lila Bruyere of Couchiching First Nation lived as a child at St. Margaret's Indian Residential School in Fort Frances, Ont. with her nine brothers and two sisters and experienced physical abuse during her stay.

"I know what I've gone through and seen with my family," Johnston said.

The intergenerational trauma is a painful experience Bruyere and Johnston discuss when they speak at high school classrooms and conferences.

He thinks action begins with education. "Educating the community is very important," he said.

"It's amazing how many adults, university students, I talk to who don't know what residential schools are."

It's why Johnston and Bruyere focus on awareness and education when they speak publicly together.

"There is nothing wrong with asking questions; I always encourage people to ask questions," he said.

"I really don't want to see this happen to my nieces and nephews."

A youth-oriented project called Feathers of Hope made similar recommendations to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its action plan last year.

Residential schools, housing and suicide are just a few issues youth leaders called for, including greater accountability from community leaders.

But Johnston said it has been a year and he hasn't seen anyone taking action. He wonders if the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations will face the same fate.

"I hope both parties, the indigenous populations of Canada and Turtle Island and the Canadian government, can work together," he said.

"I'd hate to see 10 years from now that no action has happened."

It took eight years for the commission to gather statements and testimonies from residential school survivors and to uncover truths of treatment and abuse in the schools.

The TRC made 94 recommendations on how to improve relationships with the aboriginal community.

But reconciliation is different for everyone. Johnston just hopes it isn't forgotten.

Direct Link: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/5665851-local-aboriginal-community-wants-to-see-real-action/>

Accepting cultural genocide label only a first step, experts say

By Jason Warick, The Star Phoenix June 8, 2015



Lead Commissioner Murray Sinclair at hearings at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Saskatchewan National Event at Prairieland Park, June 22. The TRC event provides a forum for those affected by the legacy of Indian Residential School system.

It's important Canadians admit their own governments committed "cultural genocide" against aboriginal people, but that label will be meaningless without action, say experts.

"It wasn't a mistake. It wasn't a few bad apples. It was done on purpose," said University of Regina professor Jim Daschuk.

"Canada was on a mission to destroy aboriginal institutions and culture and withheld food. It's finally being recognized."

In recent days, Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, former prime minister Paul Martin, Opposition leader Tom Mulcair and Truth and Reconciliation Commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair have all labelled Canada's policies, which included residential schools, cultural genocide.

"We need to recognize it by naming it," said Daschuk, author of the award-winning book *Clearing the Plains*, a meticulous account of the Canadian government's actions.

Thousands of First Nations people died of starvation as government officials withheld treaty food rations as a method of control.

Many more aboriginal children died of preventable disease, neglect, abuse or other causes in residential schools.

For decades, First Nations people needed permission to leave their the reserve or sell their farm produce.

That dark legacy continues to this day for First Nations and Metis people, including sky-high rates of diabetes, suicide and a host of other maladies.

Daschuk, an associate professor of kinesiology at the University of Regina, said he didn't use the term cultural genocide in his book, in part because he didn't think the public was ready to accept it.

"I didn't want to erect barriers to understanding," he said.

Daschuk believes that's changing, so he's used it in most of the 50 talks he's given this year. He thinks youth are particularly receptive and will grow up accepting terms like cultural genocide, he said.

"I think they're more open to a new narrative."

Daschuk said the day will soon come when that term is no longer controversial.

Jim Miller, Canada Research Chair in Native-Newcomer Relations at the University of Saskatchewan, doesn't quarrel with those who use the term, but doesn't use it himself. He doesn't think the public is ready.

"Will it just put people's backs up?" he said.

Miller thinks the term is distracting everyone from taking responsibility and action.

"We can't wait another 20 years. We need new policies," he said.

Daschuk and Miller agree true reconciliation goes beyond education or acceptance of terms. It will require concrete policy changes.

For example, Miller said most people can agree that it's wrong for First Nations schools to get less funding than those in Canada's cities and towns.

The government and First Nations leaders must support immediate, meaningful changes in this area, Miller said.

"Reconciliation has to mean redressing these shortfalls and injustices."

Daschuk said the Canadian public can also press for change.

"We as citizens can demand change. We can get it on the agenda for the elections."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Accepting+cultural+genocide+label+only+first+step+experts/11117893/story.html>

McLachlin's comments a disservice to her court, and to aboriginals

LYSIANE GAGNON

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, Jun. 10, 2015 3:00AM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Jun. 10, 2015 12:21AM EDT

I'm among those who trust and respect the Supreme Court – and precisely because I believe in what the court stands for, I was flabbergasted to see how Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin overstepped her role by declaring in a recent speech that Canada is guilty of “cultural genocide” against aboriginal people.

This is unacceptable on many counts.

Judges, especially those on the highest court, should be bound by the strictest duty of reserve. They must avoid dabbling in politics and controversies, if only to assure the public that they will be thoroughly objective when confronted with a difficult legal case. Of course all judges come to the bench with their own opinions, but like Caesar's wife, they should appear above suspicion of entertaining preconceived views.

Yes, their liberty of speech is limited, precisely because their power over governments and individuals is so great. Judges speak through their rulings and these rulings have long-lasting effects on the society. By bluntly stating that Canada's treatment of aboriginals was a “cultural genocide” – a highly inflammatory statement – the Chief Justice opened herself to accusations of prejudice when her court is faced with another cause regarding aboriginal rights. Far from helping aboriginal groups, this declaration will be a disservice to them as long as Chief Justice McLachlin presides over the court.

Even with the qualifier “cultural,” genocide is a loaded word. It was defined by the Holocaust, an operation that is unparalleled in human history, and there's been some sort of consensus, lately, that the word could also apply to the cases of the Armenians and the Tutsis. But as badly treated as they've been in past, it's a stretch to affirm that Canadian aboriginals were the victims of genocidal policies.

By any account, the colonization was actually less brutal and cruel in Canada than in the United States and Latin America, or many other parts of the world. In New France, the colonizing process was different than in the West because it took place much earlier: The French settlers quickly made friends within the aboriginal population in part because they needed them to survive in an unknown continent, in part because they wanted to convert them (in that era, saving souls from an eternity in hell was a Christian's duty). Throughout the years, there have been countless mixed marriages in Quebec. Is this a sign of cultural genocide?

What about the children in France's Brittany, who were punished for speaking their language at school (the teachers would hang a clog around the neck)? All of France's regional languages have been eradicated by the central government, yet not even the most politically correct French moralist would dare say that France committed a cultural genocide.

If all the massacres, all the wars of conquest and all the state-sponsored repressions that happened throughout human history were to be qualified as "genocidal," then everything and anything is a genocide, and the word doesn't mean anything.

Serious historians take pains to avoid "presentism," an intellectual bias by which past events are analyzed outside their historical context, in the light of today's values. Presentism is saying, for example, that Plato was "sexist" because his Republic didn't include gender parity. The system of residential schools was terribly wrong, we know now, but at the time it was commonly seen as beneficial because it would allow Indian children to be educated and converted.

In any case, there's an election looming and if Chief Justice McLachlin feels like getting involved in politics, now is the time to run for office.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/mclachlins-comments-a-disservice-to-her-court-and-to-aboriginals/article24879482/>

Keep conversation going for reconciliation

By Lesley Washington, The StarPhoenix June 11, 2015

Washington is the director of programs at YWCA Saskatoon.

I had the privilege of participating in the Walk for Reconciliation in Ottawa alongside other YWCA Canada's National Advocacy Advisory Committee members at the end of May.

Part of our reason to convene in Ottawa was to participate in the walk as an expression of our organization's commitment to the reconciliation process. The other, perhaps more

important reason, was to begin discussions on how we can move from an expressed commitment to informed and meaningful action.

With 32 member associations across the country including Saskatoon, YWCA Canada is the country's oldest and largest women's multi-service organization, the single largest provider of shelter to women and children fleeing violence, and the second largest provider of childcare services. Our vision is for women and girls to be empowered in a safe and equitable society. In our work, we see firsthand the ramifications of the historic and ongoing injustices that affect First Nation, Metis and Inuit women and their children, including poverty, homelessness and violence. This is certainly true in Saskatoon, where aboriginal women and children are disproportionately represented among those who require our emergency services.

Our organization in 2013 made a formal commitment to reconciliation through a number of key strategies, which include: strengthening our partnership with indigenous communities and organizations; developing plans to ensure indigenous women move into leadership positions within our organization; continuing to work to end the homelessness of First Nations, Metis and Inuit women and their children by providing housing, services and advocacy; and continuing to develop programs to build the leadership skills of indigenous women and girls.

YWCA Canada issued a statement last week to welcome the release of Truth and Reconciliation Commission's summary of its report and recommendations, highlighting in particular our continued call for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. This week, at our annual members meeting in Edmonton, YWCA Canada will be adopting strategic directions for the next five years, which will include renewing our commitment to reconciliation.

In Saskatoon, our board of directors has also recognized the need for change.

As part of our five-year plan, YWCA Saskatoon has committed to continue our work to becoming a more inclusive and diverse organization by establishing a process to engage the voices of aboriginal women in both the planning and delivery of services, and by building on existing collaborations and partnerships with a priority to the aboriginal community.

All levels of government must demonstrate strong leadership in translating the recommendations of the TRC into meaningful action, but I truly believe that every Canadian, non-aboriginal and aboriginal, has an important role to play, as do public and private sector organizations of all sorts.

As the TRC summary notes, reconciliation calls for community action from us all "to ensure that Canada is a country where our children and grandchildren can thrive." I am proud to be part of an organization that is setting an example of such a commitment.

We are at a watershed moment in our colonial history, where establishing right relations between First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and communities not only is imminently possible but absolutely necessary.

Our country - and certainly Saskatoon - is teeming with amazing indigenous women and men of all ages who are leading the way to change and doing truly remarkable work. We celebrate their gifts of leadership, creativity, strength and resilience.

I say this also because of the feeling I left with after Ottawa - of hope that something has fundamentally shifted in our nation, and that Canadians will not allow Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future to sit on the shelf and collect dust. People of all walks of life seem to understand in a new way that we need to keep the conversation going, and that we are all in this together.

I suggest reading: *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* by Paulette Regan; *Stolen From Our Embrace*, by Ernie Croy Suzanne Fournier; *Where the Pavement Ends* by Marie Wadden; *The Strength of Women: Ahkameyimowak*, by Priscilla Settee; *Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman*, by Yvonne Johnson and Rudy Wiebe; *The Comeback*, by John Ralston Saul.

To assist Canadians in keeping the conversation going, Reconciliation Canada has created a Kitchen Table Dialogue Guide and Youth Leader Dialogue Guide:
<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/reconciliation-begins-withme//participate/>

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Keep+conversation+going+reconciliation/11126884/story.html>

Manitoba to apologize to children taken in '60s Scoop

By Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press Posted: Jun 11, 2015 2:13 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 11, 2015 6:49 PM CT



Filmmaker Coleen Rajotte says she was lucky to be placed with a loving family, but other adoptees were scarred for life after going to abusive homes where they were treated like household help. (Twitter)

Manitoba is set to apologize to indigenous people who were taken from their parents decades ago and adopted into non-indigenous families.

The apology, thought to be the first by a Canadian province, is directed at individuals from the '60s Scoop, which many see as an extension of Indian residential schools policy.

Premier Greg Selinger said the apology, expected next week, will acknowledge damage done to those taken from their homes and their culture. Manitoba was one of the provinces most affected, so it is appropriate that it be among the first to apologize, he said.

"It's an acknowledgment that they did lose contact with their families, their language, their culture," Selinger told The Canadian Press. "That was an important loss in their life and it needs to be acknowledged. It's part of the healing process."

Adoptees have been calling for a federal apology and many want compensation for their experience, which they say was as traumatic as that suffered by residential school survivors.

Selinger said he hopes the apology prompts the federal government to say it's sorry.

"These policies were initiated at the federal level all across the country. We're acknowledging the harms done in Manitoba and the need for healing in Manitoba.

"We'd like to see the federal government address it on a pan-Canadian level as well."

From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of indigenous children were taken from their homes by child-welfare services and placed with non-aboriginal families, some in the United States.

Manitoba has organized gatherings of adoptees to share their stories and helped bring the idea of compensation, counselling and repatriation to premiers last year.

Residential school survivors have had a formal apology from Ottawa and were able to speak at hearings held by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which released its summary final report last week. But '60s Scoop adoptees haven't been formally recognized.

David Chartrand was taken from his Manitoba family when he was five and moved to Minnesota, where he said he was placed with a family that treated him like a "slave" and a "punching bag."

When he returned to his home community of Camperville, Man., in his 20s, he said he had nothing.

An apology is the least a government can do for those who feel like "forgotten people," he suggested.

"It brings recognition that there was an injustice done to us. I was hoping this would be the federal government that would do this."

Chartrand, like many other adoptees, is seeking justice through a class-action lawsuit filed in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Another class-action lawsuit by some survivors in Ontario in 2009 is still making its way through the courts.

"They can keep their apology. I'll see them in court," Chartrand said. "If the Queen herself was to say, 'I'm sorry for what they did to you,' I would accept that."

Tony Merchant, a Regina lawyer representing adoptees including Chartrand, said the government's apology is important. But if Manitoba were serious about reconciliation, it could follow the apology with a compensation package, he said.

"The first step always is to recognize wrong and then consider what ought to be done."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-to-apologize-to-children-taken-in-60s-scoop-1.3109993>

Stephen Harper glosses over residential schools issues in meeting with Pope

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Published June 11, 2015 - 7:48am

Last Updated June 11, 2015 - 12:27pm



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper meets with Pope Francis at the Vatican in Vatican City on Thursday. (ADRIAN WYLD / The Canadian Press)

VATICAN CITY — Prime Minister Stephen Harper raised the troubling findings of the residential schools commission Thursday during an unusually brief meeting with Pope Francis, but stopped short of inviting him to Canada to apologize.

Instead, Harper referred to a letter sent earlier in the week to the Vatican by his aboriginal affairs minister that merely notified the Holy See of the commission.

“Prime Minister Harper also drew attention to the letter sent by Minister (Bernard) Valcourt to the Holy See regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” Harper’s office said without elaborating.

Harper’s spokesman did not respond to a request for clarification.

Harper’s 10-minute meeting with the Pope Francis was surprisingly short by Vatican standards. Russian President Vladimir Putin had a nearly 50-minute private audience with the pontiff a day earlier.

A separate readout from the Vatican did not mention the residential schools issue among the topics discussed with Harper

Harper instead choose to pursue the theme that has dominated six-day trip to Europe — his condemnation of Putin.

Harper went into the meeting facing calls to use the occasion to secure a papal apology for the church’s role in Canada’s residential school legacy.

Perry Bellegarde, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, had said the meeting would be a “prime opportunity” for the prime minister to raise the issue.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which spoke to thousands of residential school students and documented their experiences, issued 94 recommendations last week that included a call for a papal apology on Canadian soil.

Bellegarde said a directly apology from the Pope “would be huge” and would help bring closure to those who suffered atrocities and abuses at the schools, many of which were run by the Roman Catholic Church.

In April 2009, then-AFN national chief Phil Fontaine along with four aboriginal leaders and a delegation from Canada’s Catholic Church had an audience with Pope Benedict in Rome, which produced a communique of sympathy from the Vatican.

Harper’s visit to the Vatican came on the final day of his six-country European tour, and exactly seven years after the prime minister issued his own apology in the House of Commons to residential school survivors.

Canadian officials said that because Putin visited Francis the day before Harper, the prime minister wanted to raise the topic.

“Prime Minister Harper addressed the situation in Ukraine and his deep concern with Vladimir Putin’s aggression, occupation and violence in Ukraine,” said Harper’s office. Harper also raised the plight of religious minorities at the hands of Islamic militants.

The U.S. called on the to Vatican this week to step up its concern about Ukraine in Francis’ meeting with Putin. It was the Russian leader’s second meeting with Francis since 2013.

A Vatican spokesperson said the Ukraine and Middle East crises were big topics of discussion, but the question of assigning blame to Russia did not arise.

Harper was at the Vatican for slightly less than an hour, but his actual meeting with the Pope lasted only a fraction of that time. He also met with Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican’s secretary for relations with states.

Harper was accompanied by his wife, Laureen, Defence Minister Jason Kenney, three Conservative MPs and several staffers. Julian Fantino, Harper’s associate defence minister and an Italian Canadian, was also at the meeting.

Harper was visible to reporters only briefly on three occasions when short, frenetic photo ops took place. The prime minister did not speak nor did he take questions from Canadian media travelling with them on the final day of his travel

Harper ended his trip with a call to Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who has a much closer relationship with Putin than Harper, who has isolated him.

Renzi also hosted Putin, as they cordially toured the Russian pavilion at the world’s fair. Putin breached protocol by arriving an hour and 20 minutes late for his meeting with the Pope, who encouraged him to make “sincere” efforts to bring peace to Ukraine.

Harper visited Ukraine and Poland on this trip, as well as attending the G7 leaders summit in Germany, and was to return to Canada on Thursday evening.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/canada/1292427-stephen-harper-glosses-over-residential-schools-issues-in-meeting-with-pope>

Metis survivors of residential schools still waiting for reconciliation

By
[Samantha Nock](#)
| June 9, 2015



We carry a lot with us.

We carry our stories, our loves, our histories, our traumas, inside ourselves every day. And they are heavy. They sometimes weigh on our hearts and take up residency in the back of our brains. Sometimes they make our bones ache with their presence.

The term reconciliation is something I carry with me everyday. It makes my heart heavy and my bones ache. I have talked extensively about storytelling and the duty we have to tell our stories and protect our stories and about how we carry our ancestors' stories with us. I have a duty to my *kokum* as her granddaughter: I carry her stories with me and her stories include her being a residential school survivor. Though I carry her story with me, a story that beats with every heartbeat, I do not believe it is my place to tell her story. It is hers to share if she wants to.

You see, my *kokum* is a fierce Metis lady. She's a force of nature and someone I am truly honoured to share life with. She is unbreakable. She has this hilarious, crass sense of humour you would not expect out of a tiny Elder. She is someone who has such a compelling spirit that when I found out she had been through the residential school system, I honestly could not place these atrocities in her life.

Around the time I learned my *kokum* had attended Residential School was the time she was filling out all the paperwork for the settlement. This is when we found out that the Ile-a-la-Crosse school was not included, that Metis survivors were left out of this grand process of apology and reconciliation. This is also when I heard Metis Elders, my Elders, from across the country start to lay their traumas out for the world to hear. Because a process was created that measured abuse in dollars and called it an apology. So I heard Metis Elders yell their abuse in order to be legitimized. I listened to my *kokum* rehash her abuse so she could be a part of this grand act of reconciliation.

I want to reserve a moment to honour that this process was healing and powerful for some Survivors and I do not mean my words and feelings to neglect this.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission coming to conclusion and our era of reconciliation starting, I can not help but feel like my family and other Metis families have been left out of this process. [Metis representatives were excluded from the closing ceremonies of the TRC](#), schools that were in Metis communities were excluded from the agreement, and from my own experience calling 1-800 numbers and talking to representatives at commission events that Metis peoples were uncomfortably excluded in many ways.

I obviously can not speak for Metis survivors, but as someone who has lived with this reality in her family I am unreconciled. I will stand in support of survivors and this process that has happened, but I cannot do so without my *kokum*'s stories taking up space in my heart and making it heavy.

I carry my *kokum* with me. I carry the Metis elders who have been left out with me. State-mandated reconciliation that left out peoples who have been violated by the state is not reconciliation, to me.

I still do not understand the extent of intergenerational trauma, but I read somewhere that we carry our ancestors' memories in our DNA. I will never understand the extent of the abuses my *kokum* faced in residential school or the violence my ancestors faced through violent dispossession of our communities and from diaspora. I do know that these are things I carry with me and these are things that my children will carry with them. I do not want this to be a burden, I do not look at it as a burden, but I do not look at it as something that has now been reconciled with the close of the TRC. I do not feel calmed or feel that I can pass down a legacy to my future children in a good way.

I am proud of survivors who told their stories and reached out through the Truth Commission process. I feel honoured to have been witness to their stories. But I feel for myself, for my family, for our communities, we are not healed.

I do not have the answers or a vision of a solution. But I know that even though I carry my *kokum*'s trauma and stories with me through her experience, I also carry her immense love and crass sense of humour too. Every now and then I have to remind myself that we are not our traumas, we not just an accumulation of the hurt and pain that we have

experienced. We are also resistance, resilience, tenderness, and power. We are all our most beloved memories, memories that make our heart just that much lighter. We are the memories that make us laugh till our bellies hurt and our eyes crinkle at the sides.

We carry a lot with us throughout our days, and it is taxing and it is hard. But I think we need to remember, especially given our recent times, to be tender with ourselves. To give ourselves space to grieve and vent but also space to practice radical self love. We have to protect the memories we carry in us, even the ones that hurt.

Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/samantha-nock/2015/06/metis-survivors-residential-schools-still-waiting-reconciliatio>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Justice Department hears Native American concerns at school

By The Associated Press

June 5th, 2015 @ 6:31am

YPSILANTI, Mich. (AP) — Officials with the Justice Department have met with Eastern Michigan University President Susan Martin and a Native American campus group to discuss a harassment case and continued concerns over the use of the school's Hurons logo.

Laura Sagolla, a tribal liaison for the Department of Justice, attended Tuesday's meeting "to listen and ask questions about ways in which the university might respond" to concerns raised by the Native American Student Organization and the local tribal community, Gina Balaya, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit, told The Detroit News (<http://bit.ly/1KIFLwE>).

Native American elder Nathaniel Phillips told investigators that on April 11 Eastern Michigan students at an off-campus party were dressed in red face-paint and feathers. When Phillips told the students their dress was offensive, they reportedly threw a full beer can at him and told him to return to a reservation.

School spokesman Geoff Larcom said several members of the school's leadership, including Provost Kim Schatzel and officials from the university's public safety department, have met with Native American Student Organization members since the incident.

The school said in a statement April 17 that it "takes these matters very seriously and remains strongly committed to maintaining a respectful and inclusive and safe environment."

Mark Fancher, a staff attorney for racial justice for the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, said that at Tuesday's meeting Martin refused to stop use of the logo following a request from the school's Native American Student Organization.

Martin returned the Hurons logo, which depicts a Native American face, to the marching band uniform in 2012 to promote what she said was the Ypsilanti university's history and pride. The log is hidden under a front uniform flap. The Hurons logo earlier was used until 1991.

"It's a disgraceful part of the history," Fancher said. "It is causing harm to the students. It needs to go."

Eastern Michigan became the "Hurons" in 1929 and the "Eagles" in 1991. Larcom said the school changed its logo and mascot to avoid using Native American names and images in part based on concerns about the negative stereotypes reinforced by such logos and representations.

Direct Link: <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=157&sid=34940748>

Canada Just Confronted Its 'Cultural Genocide' Of Native People. Why Can't The U.S. Do The Same?

Posted: 06/05/2015 2:17 pm EDT Updated: 2 hours ago



My grandmother still recalls the day when the Indian agent came to the Canim Lake Indian Reserve in British Columbia, Canada, to round up the children and take them away to the residential school. She remembers how her parents tried to hide her with a cousin in a backwoods cabin, and how the whole community wailed when government officials took the children on the back of a cattle truck to the Williams Lake residential school.

The Roman Catholic Church operated the school with funding from the Canadian government. Its mandate -- like Indian schools operated throughout Canada and the U.S. at the time -- was to proselytize, civilize and assimilate the local Native peoples with a Catholic and industrial school education.

My grandmother recalls how the little girls would speak their native language in hushed tones, calling the nuns "kenkeknem," which means "black bear" in the Shuswap language. She also remembers how they were beaten when they were caught speaking Shuswap, and eventually how she grew to hate her language, culture and herself for being Indian.

The experiences my grandmother lived through were the result of a broader assault waged on indigenous rights and culture across Canada and the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. Indeed, her experience is strikingly similar to that of the late Lakota musician and activist, Floyd Red Crow Westerman. Westerman said in a 2008 [interview with NPR](#) that he would "never forget how all the mothers were crying" as they watched their children being taken away on a bus from the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1946, the same year my grandmother was taken.

Throughout Indian Country, there are many experiences like Westerman's, which Native Americans must patch together to create a vague picture of the nation's legacy of abuse against Native children and families. It's a legacy that the United States would prefer to forget. Canada, on the other hand, has acknowledged that it can no longer hide from its past, beginning a process that has put Native people like my grandmother on a path toward healing.

For decades, her ordeal and those of Native communities across Canada went unheard by the broader Canadian public. In 2008, however, the cries of survivors of the nation's Indian residential schools led Prime Minister Stephen Harper to issue an apology and led to the creation of a national Truth and Reconciliation Commission later that year.

On Tuesday, after six years of work, the commission released a summary of its findings, which describes the residential school system as a form of [cultural genocide](#).

While the full six-volume report isn't due out until later this year, [the summary](#) contains both an unvarnished account of the system's cruelty and a set of recommendations to chart a path forward.

The [report found that more than 6,000 of the roughly 150,000 students at the residential schools, or roughly 1 in 25, died](#). This is slightly higher than the 1 in 26 rate at which Canadians died in World War II. In the early years of the program, half of all children who attended the schools perished.

The commission will establish an archive at the University of Manitoba to house the experiences of 6,750 survivors who spoke with its members, my grandmother's story

among them. This repository will serve as a permanent reminder of the human cost of the 139 schools that operated in Canada between 1883 and 1996.

The report's [94 recommendations](#) include suggested changes to the oath of Canadian citizenship to recognize existing treaties with Native nations. Multiple recommendations advise the Canadian government to adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. All aim to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation."

The report also raises questions about the experiences of some 100,000 Native children swept up south of the 49th parallel, at one of almost 500 Native American boarding schools in the U.S, the first of which opened in 1879.

The Native American boarding school system began in the United States in 1875, when Army Lt. Richard Henry Pratt shipped 72 Arapaho, Caddo, Cheyenne, Comanche and Kiowa prisoners of war across the continent to St. Augustine, Florida. There, Pratt had the prisoners instructed in English and converted to Christianity.

Seeing his efforts at assimilation as largely successful, Pratt opened the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in 1879. The doctrine espoused by its founder: "[Kill the Indian and Save the Man](#)."

Scholars such as [Andrea Smith](#), [David Wallace Adams](#) and [Brenda Child](#) have researched the history of Native American boarding schools. Their work, which documents physical and sexual abuse, rampant disease, negligent healthcare and the system's destructive legacy suggests that the scandal of Native American boarding schools in the U.S. is on par with the residential school system in Canada.

In recent years, the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition has led calls for healing and reconciliation for survivors of the boarding school system. They have received support from numerous national, regional and tribal [organizations](#), including the National Congress of American Indians, National Indian Health Board, National Indian Education Association and the National Indian Child Welfare Association.

"Our goal is healing and reconciliation, and for healing and reconciliation, what we need is acknowledgement and the acceptance of responsibility by the federal government and the Christian denominations for the conception and implementation of this policy," said Donald Wharton, spokesman for the Native American Rights Fund, the legal representative of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

"What we are interested in is the resources to support the processes for healing of individual communities in Indian Country," he added.

However, the push to redress past grievances against Native Americans faces challenges unique to the U.S. judicial system. Unlike in Canada, suing the federal government is

difficult because of statutes of limitations, Wharton explained, which severely limit the ability of former boarding-school students to sue.

For example, South Dakota legislators passed a [statute in 2010](#) blocking anyone over 40 from suing an institution, such as the church, for childhood sexual abuse. This severely curtails the legal pressure former students of boarding schools can apply on the government.

Without the sort of inquiry that Canada has committed to -- and with few options for legal recourse -- broad understanding of the experiences of generations of Native American children who faced the systematic erasure of their culture (and worse) remains lacking, said Andrea Carmen, executive director of the International Indian Treaty Council and a board member of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

Increasing public knowledge about the Native American boarding schools is an important first step, she added.

"Most U.S. citizens... are not aware of this," Carmen said. "Even the progressive human rights activists don't know that this has happened and that we are still addressing the traumatic legacy of this situation in Indian nations."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/05/native-american-boarding-schools_n_7513310.html

Appeals court sides with tribes in fight over land decisions

22 hours ago • By SUDHIN THANAWALA

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — In a victory for Native American tribes, an appeals court ruled Thursday that states cannot use negotiations for a Native American casino to challenge the federal government's decisions to recognize a tribe and set aside land for it.

An 11-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said states have to use a separate process to contest those decisions and have a window of six years to file their challenge.

The decision removes the uncertainty many tribes faced about their land status after a smaller 9th Circuit panel reached a different conclusion, said Joe Webster, a partner with the Washington, D.C.-based law firm of Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker who was closely watching the case.

"This is certainly an important decision for tribes," he said.

The ruling came in a fight between California and the Humboldt County-based Big Lagoon Rancheria over the tribe's plan for a Las Vegas-style casino.

The tribe accused the state in a lawsuit of failing to negotiate a casino deal in good faith, and largely won its case in federal district court. A call to the state attorney general's office for comment about Thursday's ruling wasn't immediately returned.

California appealed, saying the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs did not properly recognize the tribe and lacked authority to take an 11-acre parcel into trust for it, according to the ruling. The state cited a 2009 U.S. Supreme Court decision that said federal officials could take land into trust only on behalf of tribes that were recognized before 1934.

The Big Lagoon Rancheria began appearing on the federal list of tribal entities in 1979, according to the ruling.

Circuit Judge Diarmuid O'Scannlain, however, said California never filed a timely administrative challenge to the tribe's appearance on the list or the government's decision to take land into trust for it and was instead engaging in a "collateral attack."

"Allowing California to attack collaterally the BIA's decision to take the eleven-acre parcel into trust outside the (Administrative Procedure Act) would constitute just the sort of end-run that we have previously refused to allow, and would cast a cloud of doubt over countless acres of land that have been taken into trust for tribes recognized by the federal government," he wrote.

The ruling allows the Big Lagoon Rancheria's casino proposal to go forward. A final decision on the proposal will now go before the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the court said.

Direct Link: http://www.pantagraph.com/news/national/appeals-court-sides-with-tribes-in-fight-over-land-decisions/article_242b0702-fd8f-58df-850b-46bb20cf31d9.html

Newport Beach woman aids impoverished Native American reservation

BY DEEPA BHARATH

2015-06-04 17:55:34



When Twila True stepped on the grounds of the impoverished Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota three years ago, she finally felt like she was home.

In the decades prior, the 43-year-old Newport Beach woman was entrenched in her own battle – with an alcoholic mother, a broken home and bills to pay.

But True has come a long way since her childhood days living part time on the reservation.

She was not only the first high school graduate in her family, but the only one from the Native American reservation to climb all the way up the corporate ladder – to CEO and beyond.

Today, True finds herself in a position to help her own people, the Oglala Sioux Tribe. In January, she started the Irvine-based True Sioux Hope Foundation to help raise money to improve living conditions there.

“It broke my heart to see the terrible conditions in the reservation, which to me, is still home,” True said.

Pine Ridge has much higher rates of unemployment and alcoholism, compared to the rest of the nation. One in four infants there are born with fetal alcohol syndrome. The teen suicide rate is four times the national rate and infant mortality is three times the national rate.

What True sees in the eyes of her people, she says, is a sense of hopelessness.

And that’s something she hopes to change.

As a child, True had an unusual opportunity. She lived off the reservation for most of the year, spending summers in Pine Ridge with her grandmother.

True’s grandparents had won a government lottery program that helped the family leave the reservation and move to the San Gabriel Valley. So, True was born and raised in El Monte.

True's mother was only 16 when she had her, and the woman struggled with alcohol addiction. For the first five years of her life, True lived with her grandmother, uncles and aunts.

"It sounds horrible," she said. "But it's the culture. No matter what problems we may have, we take care of each other. Even as I shuttled between homes as a child, I never felt unloved or abandoned because people took care of me."

When she turned 5, her mother married, but her issues with alcohol continued. Just as True was about to graduate from high school, her parents divorced. It threw a wrench into her college plans.

"I moved in with my stepfather and started working to help provide for the family," she said.

True's goal at the time was to break the cycle of poverty and become financially secure.

"I worked 24/7 to accomplish that goal," she said. "I was driven by fear because I did not want to end up like my mother and so many other girls from the reservation."

True accomplished her mission, and then some. She served as CEO of Synthane Taylor, a circuit board manufacturing company with more than 300 employees. She met the man she would marry, Alan True, during a blind date at the former Villa Nova Restaurant in Newport Beach in 1997.

Two years later, they were married and traveled around Asia setting up manufacturing plants, expanding their business ventures. True had her hands full among her three children, the family's business and their travels.

While in China, in 2010, True founded an orphanage that worked to improve the lives of premature babies, and children with deformities and a host of other medical conditions.

The orphanage took in frail or sick children, gave them the necessary treatments and surgeries, and allowed them to recover before giving them up for adoption. So far, True Children's Healing Home has helped more than 200 children and placed them with families around the world, True said.

The True family settled in Newport Beach in 2012. True started a real estate firm and, most recently, Polished Perfect, an upscale nail salon.

But despite her travels, adventures and accomplishments, True never forgot her home – Pine Ridge.

When True went back to Pine Ridge in 2012, she was horrified by the conditions. “This was the first time I saw Pine Ridge as a grown woman,” she said.

When she visited as a child, she didn’t see the poverty or strife, she said. She made fried bread with her grandma, played with other children on the street and went to religious ceremonies.

As she walked around Pine Ridge as an adult, however, the pain of its people was palpable. Main Street in Pine Ridge was three blocks of dilapidated buildings in the middle of the reservation and the grocery store she saw had wilted produce and rancid meat on its shelves, True said.

The meeting place at the reservation is a gas station called Big Bat’s, where folks would gather for coffee and doughnuts.

As True stopped at Big Bat’s, she saw a teen mom clutching her baby and begging for money.

True saw the young woman give her baby, about 2 months old, a brown liquid from a feeding bottle.

“What is it?” she asked the girl.

“Diet Coke,” she replied.

True said she stuffed a \$20 bill in the girl’s hand and told her to give her baby milk.

During her visit, True also saw the suffering elderly, which in Pine Ridge is people in their 40s and 50s.

“In the winter, they would freeze to death because they were too weak to chop wood and keep their homes warm,” she said.

True decided that she would start a foundation to help the reservation’s girls empower and educate themselves. She is also working to get formula for babies and hires young men in the reservation to provide firewood to the elderly.

“We talk about sending aid to foreign nations,” True said. “But what about these people right here in our backyard who are living in conditions worse than in Third World countries? What hope do they have?”

Two years ago, True decided to adopt a child from the reservation.

Within months, she got a call from tribal leaders letting her know that they had a 3-month-old girl who was ready for adoption. The Trues brought home their fourth child, Taylor Warrior True.

Taylor is True's promise to her reservation – that she will never see it wither and die.

In the years to come, True says, she would like to tell the world more about her home.

“It's easy to dismiss them as drunks,” True said. “But the drink and drugs are merely to numb decades of pain and hopelessness in their hearts. That needs to be understood.”

She would like to see them get educated and prosper. She would like to see the rich heritage and the Sioux language preserved.

For True, going back home is just natural. It's inevitable.

“I just have a longing to be with my people,” she said. “It's this sense of home, tribe and family that's been with me throughout my life. Even if I wasn't in the reservation, the reservation was always with me.”

Today, True travels to Pine Ridge in her chartered airplane. Pine Ridge, located 100 miles from Rapid City, doesn't have an airport, but a narrow landing strip. So, when she gets close to the reservation, she communicates with the tribal leaders via radio to let them know she is close and they send a man in a pickup truck to the landing strip.

When he arrives, he parks the truck and turns on the headlights so True's airplane can land.

The tribe will always help True find her way home.

Direct Link:

<http://www.ocreger.com/common/printer/view.php?db=ocreger&id=664538>

Australian Indigenous tribes fighting resource project at home visits Alberta First Nations

[National News](#) | June 5, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#)



(Adrian Burragubba and Murrawah Johnson visit the Beaver Lake Cree Nation in Alberta. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN)

Brandi Morin

APTN National News

BEAVER LAKE CREE NATION — Delegates from two Australian Indigenous tribes travelling the world to seek support and build awareness about a massive coal mine set to be built within their sacred territories stopped in Alberta this week.

The Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council are “gravely” concerned about the impacts the project will have on their traditional lands.

The Indian owned company Adani is awaiting land lease agreements to construct the 40km by 13km Carmichael mine north of the Galilee Basin in Central Queensland, Australia- approximately 10km away from Wangan and Jagalingou territories.



Murrawah Johnson of the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council meets with Beaver Lake Cree Chief Germaine Anderson. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN

The group visited Alberta First Nations this week to learn about the plight faced by communities there involved in litigation battles with governments and industry.

“I think it’s now time that we join together as Indigenous brothers and sisters all around the world,” said Murrawah Johnson, who represented the youth of the Wangan and Jagalingou tribes.

“We’re fighting the same issues, fighting the same people, fighting the same companies, fighting the fossil fuel industry, fighting our governments to say this is not ok. We will not consent- we have not consented. And our right to either give or withhold consent is being oppressed.”

The tribes believe that if the Carmicheal mine is allowed to proceed it will “tear the heart out of the land.” Due to the massive size of the mine it would have devastating impacts on their native title, ancestral lands and waters, totemic plants and animals and tribal environmental culture and heritage.

Community members, leadership and Elders from Beaver Lake Cree Nation in Northern Alberta welcomed the delegation yesterday.

Over freshly cooked bowls of duck soup, bannock and baked pickerel friendships were made and stories were swapped of the battle against industrial development.

“We’re here to let you know about our struggle,” said Adrian Burragubba from the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council.

“We share in the struggle against colonization and our fight is against the colonies destroying our sacred sites.”

Beaver Lake Cree Nation filed a lawsuit against the Alberta and Canadian governments in 2008 for the over development of a tar sands expansion project happening in their homelands.

Although it is a small community with approximately 900 members, Beaver Lake’s traditional territories are vast, stretching across 38, 927km through boreal forest which also sits among large oil sands deposits.

Currently there are about 35,000 oil and natural gas wells here.

The band is raising funds to take the case to trial and is relying on Treaty rights to win.

Beaver Lake is a signatory to Treaty 6, signed in 1876, which included promises protecting their inherent right to hunt, fish and trap and to ensure a future of balance development.

Eric Lameman, 57, grew up on the land, his father was a trapper and passed down the knowledge to his son. However, Lameman has noticed changes in recent years. A change in the land that shouldn’t be so recognizable in such a short period of time.

“As soon as you see land starting to change you spot it right away,” he said.

“You can see what industrial developments, how it’s hurt our land.”

He was happy to host the Wangan and Jagalingou tribes and said the time has come for Indigenous people to come together to take a stand against billion dollar industries.

There is strength in numbers, and if people join together they just might win.

“They are going to have the same battle that we have. And the more they learn from what we are doing, I think they will stand a better chance. The water we drink- the water of life. And our air is being hurt. Our lands, everything.”

He pointed out that the dangers of the destruction caused by industrial development is not just for Indigenous people but for all of humanity.

“Every race will get involved because it involves everybody. Every race is finally starting to realize what industry is doing to us. It’s going to kill us- everyone. It’s not just the native people.”

The Australian tribal delegation planned to visit Fort McMurray and conduct a fly-over tour of the tar sands before making their way to the community of Fort Chipewyan on Thursday. The Athabasca Fort Chipewyan First Nation is also involved in litigation against tar sands operations that are encroaching their territories.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/06/05/australian-indigenous-tribes-visit-alberta-first-nations-build-solidarity-fighting-threatening-industrial-development/>

Island in a Storm

A conflict between the government and indigenous people threatens one of Brazil’s most unique national parks.

By [Brendan Borrell](#)



In 2002, the Javaé and Karajá tribes burned down the headquarters of Araguaia National Park, seen here in January 2015, to protest the federal government’s crackdown on illegal fishing and ranching.

Photo courtesy Raoni Japiassu/ICMBio

*Each Friday, [Roads & Kingdoms](#) and **Slate** publish a new dispatch from around the globe. For more foreign correspondence mixed with food, war, travel, and photography, visit their [online magazine](#) or follow [@roadskingdoms](#) on Twitter.*

LAGOA DA CONFUSÃO, Brazil—It was noon, and we were driving west as drab fields of parched soybean and scrub rushed past. Our goal was to find a local with a skiff who could take us across a river and into a national park that does or does not exist, depending on whom you ask.

There was a metallic click as my companion, Raoni Japiassu Merisse, the very real boss of this paper park, slid the ammunition cartridge into his black semiautomatic pistol engraved with the initials of his employer, the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation. Japiassu had never fired a single shot outside of his training, but he was prepared to. “Our leaders believe we are at war with the indigenous,” he said with a mixture of duty and resignation.

Just 30 years old, Japiassu was the man caught in the middle of what he called “an impossible situation.” On federal maps, [Araguaia National Park](#) still encompasses the northern third of Bananal Island, a 200-mile long river island in north central Brazil that is shaped like a crude arrowhead pointing north. The place was once considered Brazil’s answer to Yellowstone, but 13 years ago, the Javaé and Karajá tribes who live on the island took one of Japiassu’s predecessors hostage, commandeered boats and vehicles, and set fire to the park headquarters.

They were angry about attempts to rein in illegal fishing and cattle ranching, activities that brought outsiders—and cash—to the impoverished island people. After a long struggle, federal lawmakers demarcated new indigenous territories that have complete overlap with the park’s boundaries, creating a legal conundrum. Japiassu’s bosses back in the capital of Brasília demand that he enforce Brazil’s conservation laws inside an indigenous territory where he no longer has unambiguous jurisdiction.

Every year, the forest becomes a veritable inferno as it is set ablaze to facilitate dragging nets along lake bottoms and to make room for illegal cattle pastures. Over the last 10 years, satellites have recorded 3,611 fires inside the park, according to the [National Institute for Space Research](#).



Riding a boat on the Araguaia River, Araguaia National Park, Brazil, February 2015.

If Japiassu ever has to unholster his weapon, the subsequent outrage could topple the government's tenuous hold on the island. When he began working in 2008, there were 12 people working in his office. Now, there were just three. The park, at that moment, had a half-dozen boats it had seized from illegal fisherman, but it didn't have a single working motor. "The indigenous people won't leave this area," he said, "but it's possible that we will leave one day."

Japiassu has wild, curly black hair and a scraggly black beard covering the chin and jawline of his angular face. He reminds me of the park's mascot, the jabiru, a lanky stork common along the Araguaia River. He wears rectangular glasses perched on his beak of a nose, and he speaks English cautiously, enunciating each syllable with a deep, emphatic voice. When I visited him in February, his wife was two weeks away from giving birth to their first child.

"Does it make your wife nervous?" I asked, gesturing at the pistol.

"I can only tell her the main things," he said. "I try not to alarm her."

* * *

It took all day and part of the next to reach the river's edge because of one delay after another. Standing on the high bank at last, I got my first glimpse of the vast green canopy stretching across Bananal Island. It is the largest river island in the world and the place where two of Brazil's most diverse ecosystems—the Amazon and the Cerrado savanna—collide with all the biological fireworks that entails. Low-lying parts of the island are eerie-looking flooded forests with freshwater sponges clinging to stilted roots. Areas of high ground, where the 34 indigenous villages of the Javaé and Karajá are scattered, look like classic Cerrado: a blend of dry forest, scrub, and grassland.

During the dry season from May to September, the game trails are thick with the three-toed tracks of tapir and the paws and claws of jaguars and giant anteaters. As the water level drops, temporary lakes, known as igapós, become cleaved from the river course, trapping hundreds of bizarre fish species, including the 400-pound pirarucu, a silvery monster with teeth on its tongue. Deep in the Mata do Mamão, a dense, nearly

inaccessible forest on the center of the island, rumors persist about an [uncontacted tribe of Ava-Canoeiro Indians](#).

Japiassu is trying to rebuild the park's relationship with the indigenous, one village at a time. He had established a relatively good rapport with Walter, the chief of Txukode who was supportive of the park's enforcement efforts—so long as they benefited his people. Walter is a mellow, friendly man with graying eyebrows and a constellation of pockmarks on his cheeks. After discussing the conflict with Walter at his second home in Lagoa da Confusão, he had agreed to give us a tour of his tribal land in exchange for 50 gallons of gas.



Chief Walter Javaé heads out on an afternoon fishing trip inside Araguaia National Park in February 2015.

After we pulled out from the cove where Walter hid his skiff, we headed south along the main channel of the river with Bananal Island on our right. The water was unusually low for this time of year, and the sandy beaches were packed with water birds along with the occasional black caiman, a once-endangered species whose numbers have recently risen. In the overhanging scrub, I spotted what looked like a chicken with a mohawk. This was a hoatzin, famously called the stinkbird because its herbivorous diet endows its droppings with a barnyard stench.

* * *

According to the Javaé people, there was a time when the sun was as black as swamp water. They lived in a magical realm beneath the bogs and rivers of Bananal Island. In this subterranean Eden, everyone was healthy, no one quarreled, and no one ever died. If you thought about eating fish for dinner, a fish would materialize before your eyes.

But this region, called Berahatxi, was far from perfect. The world was thick in an ankle-deep layer of mud. The water there was murky and foul-tasting. The fish always seemed undercooked. No one had ever experienced the pleasure of sex. One by one, these people explored tunnels that would take them out of the depths, and they began to encounter other people who had already emerged.

The Earth's surface, [the Brazilian anthropologist Patricia de Mendonça Rodrigues](#) has recounted, “would prove itself to be both fascinating, owing to the novelties that were to be found, and terrifying, owing to the prices they would have to pay for being there.”

The idea to establish a national park on Bananal Island came from a black abolitionist and military engineer in the state of Bahia. In 1876, André Rebouças was inspired by the establishment of Yellowstone and suggested that Bananal Island could become one of Brazil's first parks. Almost 90 years later, on Dec. 31, 1959, President Juscelino Kubitschek declared the entire island Araguaia National Park.



The beaches of the Araguaia River are known for their ferocious piranhas, seen here in February 2015.

Kubitschek had a [Fitzcarraldo](#)-esque dream to colonize the nation's interior and create a Brazilian identity. As part of [Operation Bananal](#), he brought in modernist architect Oscar Niemeyer to build a stilted hotel and resort, the Hotel JK, overlooking a crocodile and piranha-infested beach near an Indian village on the Araguaia River.

"Here—where they were alone, abandoned in the jungle—on the 27th day of July 1960, began the integration of the Bananal Island community by the will of President Juscelino Kubitschek, helped by God and men for the love of Brazil," read a plaque at the president's island residence, called Alvoradinha.

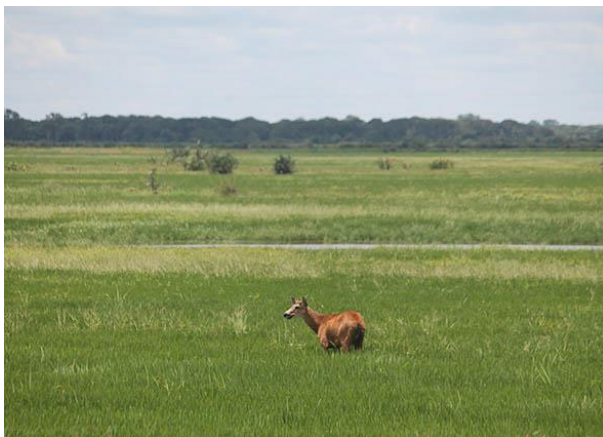
The indigenous people were far less exuberant about this arrangement. Brazilian settlers invaded indigenous land in greater numbers, fishing with nets and dynamite and stocking the island with as many as 200,000 head of cattle. When they actually paid to lease the land, it was often for far less than the market value. Villages were robbed of the hardwood trees. Violence was common. "An Indian by the name of Luiz was beaten up, by four young men, so that they could have sexual intercourse with his Indian wife," a government official [wrote](#) in a report from 1964. "Sir, the Javaés have been suffering for years, without those who commit the crimes being punished."

The history of the park since Kubitschek's time goes like this: In 1971, the Brazilian government gave three-quarters of the island park over to an indigenous reserve. In 2002, the Javaé and Karajá demanded more. They invaded the park headquarters and razed a fisheries inspection station.

By 2010, the Brazilian government had conceded to their demands and established two new indigenous territories in the north that would have complete overlap with the national park. For conservationists, it was the beginning of the end. “Bananal Island has now fallen into the maw of the Indian,” [wrote](#) Marcos Sá Correa, the editor of the Brazilian environmental news site *O Eco*.

* * *

Japiassu’s first job with the park involved trying to put an end to illegal fishing with a groundbreaking fisheries agreement with the indigenous people. Each resident would be allowed to fish for 100 kilograms each month and could sell what he or she pleased. Outsiders, however, were forbidden from fishing under any circumstances.



Araguaia National Park in February 2015

Japiassu felt good about his work and was fond of the indigenous people. He was born in Goiana, a pleasant city in the center of the country, but raised in Palmas, the steamy capital of Tocantins state. His mother named him after Raoni Metuktire, the Kayapo chief who, in 1989, made a global tour with Sting in order campaign for the establishment of a united indigenous territory along the Xingu River. “I always loved the Cerrado,” he says. “I wanted to fight deforestation.”

The head of the park at the time told Japiassu that his job was always to build relationships. “I am the bad guy, and you are the good guy,” he told him. But in early 2012, the park head announced that he was departing and that Japiassu would have to assume his mantle. In other words, he would have to become the bad guy.

During a crackdown on illegal fishing that implicated the owner of a restaurant in the city of Porto Nacional, Japiassu confronted the chief of Boto Velho village who had given the fishermen access to waters inside the national park. He showed him photographic evidence of the crime and said that no punishment would befall the indigenous people—only the fishermen. He demanded that the chief let his men enter Boto Velho and seize their boats. The chief refused. “I am not afraid neither to die nor to kill,” the chief told him. “If something happens, you will be the person responsible.”

Japiassu resolved to isolate the rogue chief. He announced that he would no longer send his firefighters into the disputed territory, arguing that the threats had made him concerned for their safety. When a fire broke out in May 2012, Japiassu monitored it by satellite, watching it grow pixel by pixel. By the second week, it was the largest forest fire in the country and appeared on the nightly news program *Fantástico*.

Japiassu's superiors in Brasília were caught off-guard by the negative publicity. They ordered him [to take action](#), and he found himself begging the chief for a guarantee of safe passage. "It was humiliating, not just for me but for the Brazilian government," Japiassu told me. "It destroyed all of our work."

* * *

Out on the river, Walter waved to one of his relatives, bobbing up and down in the water, trying to untangle a net beneath his motorized canoe. When we came for a closer look, we saw five hefty freshwater turtles wriggling on their backs.



The Javaé people sustainably harvest Amazonian river turtles, seen here in Araguaia National Park in February 2015, for food. Nonindigenous people are not allowed to hunt the turtles.

Our boat made a wide arching turn across the flat water and followed a tributary into the island's interior. Suddenly, a pinkish dolphin breached the surface and exhaled from its blowhole. Walter cut the engine, and we were surrounded by about a half-dozen of these dolphins, popping up, snorting, and then vanishing again in the black water.

Walter chuckled at their antics and said his people revered the curious animals. So do scientists: Last year, they recognized the [Araguaia river dolphin](#) as a new species, isolated by rapids from the other two dolphins living in the Amazon.

When they arrived at Walter's village, a dusty smattering of huts on the edge of the park, we goofed off with a bow and arrow, and the men performed a traditional song for us. As I wandered around under the searing sun, I met a 22-year-old man named Araruwe who was resting on a hammock made from a tattered fishing net. He had recently migrated here from Cananoa, a village in the south.

He said that there were too many people using the indigenous reserve and the hunting and fishing had deteriorated. Inside the national park, he said, you could have all the fish you desired.

Knowing the sad history of this place, I sympathized with the indigenous people. At the same time, it was hard to understand how a population of 4,300 needed the island's entire 8,000-square-mile area to survive. That's 1,200 acres for every man, woman, and child. How is it possible that they cannot use their resources more efficiently?

Japiassu knew his own days were numbered, as the indigenous kept moving north. Illegal fishing was still a problem, and cattle numbers on the island were rising again. Walter had said he would cooperate on efforts to keep cattle out of the park, but Japiassu knew that would only work if the tribes had an alternative source of income. He felt like he was a man alone, fighting for something he wasn't sure he believed in anymore. He would leave as soon as he found someone to replace him. "I don't want to take part in this lie," he told me. "I am starting to think, maybe, it would be better to extinguish the national park."

At the end of our visit, sweat was dripping down Japiassu's brow, and we were both thirsty. Walter pulled a pitcher of water out of the refrigerator at the concrete block school and poured it into a glass for Japiassu. He held it up to his eyes. It was the color of weak tea. He had no choice. He took a sip and said it tasted like dirt.

Reporting in Brazil was supported by the [Mongabay Special Reporting Initiative](#).

Direct Link:

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/roads/2015/06/bananal_island_a_conflict_between_park_rangers_and_indigenous_people_threatens.single.html

Not So New, Not So Different: On Red Wolf and Indigenous Representation in the New Marvel

by [James Leask](#) June 5, 2015 1:00 PM



Yesterday [Marvel Comics](#) released [the first teaser image](#) for All New, All Different Marvel, the post-[Secret Wars](#) relaunch for the Marvel Universe. Editor-in-chief [Axel Alonso](#) and senior VP of sales and marketing David Gabriel hit the media to publicize it, Alonso [telling USA Today](#) that the new lineup of characters and creators will show “diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity.” The [image itself](#) highlights a lot of the company’s recent efforts in diversity, with characters like Ultimate Spider-Man Miles Morales, Ms. Marvel, Captain America Sam Wilson, and Spider-Gwen getting visible spotlights. The image also included an unexpected appearance by the Native American superhero Red Wolf.

Red Wolf seems to fit one of All New, All Different Marvel’s goals of bringing back “forgotten” characters. ‘Red Wolf’ is a title given to a series of four characters, usually Cheyenne, with mystical wolf powers from the god Owayodata and a wolf companion named Lobo, none of whom have ever been particularly important. You may remember them from being the Rawhide Kid’s sidekick, or from a quick appearance in the recent *Scarlet Spider* series you didn’t read. On face value, rejuvenating Red Wolf is a fantastic idea, an opportunity to do something that [I stated the need for the last time I talked about indigenous superheroes](#): increase the presence of North America’s first peoples in the medium.

If the first thing I’d learned about this news was, “Marvel’s bringing back Red Wolf in an important way,” I’d have been thrilled. That’s exactly what I want. There’s a problem, though: that’s *not* how I first learned about it. I saw the promo image first. And in the promo image, Red Wolf is dressed like the most problematic stereotype you have ever seen of an aboriginal person. He’s holding a bow and arrow. He’s wearing buckskin breeches. He’s wearing a loincloth on *top* of the buckskin breeches. He has a bone necklace and a warpaint. He’s not wearing a shirt. The only thing missing from the Injun Stereotype Bingo Card is a feather in his hair. It’s hard to make this *more* suspect-looking.



Doc Shaner.

This isn't the only time we've seen Red Wolf recently. When the *Secret Wars* tie-in *Secret Wars: 1872* was announced, amidst all the images of 19th century Steve Rogers and Tony Stark in dapper suits, was an image, [on then-series artist Doc Shaner's Tumblr](#) and a [tweet](#) by Alonso, of Red Wolf more or less as he appears on the All New, All Different Marvel teaser image. Oh, and there's a feather in his hair in these pictures, so... uh... bingo, I guess.

The representation was iffy enough in the context of 1872. It's easy to defend the antiquated dress by saying, *hey, it's the 19th century, so olde-tyme-y dress is appropriate*. There are a couple of problems with that.

First, it takes the dangerous position that in the late 19th century, aboriginal people pretty much only dressed in breeches, loincloths and a startling lack of upper body wear. Of course, this isn't true; not only did aboriginal people wear a wide variety of clothes, including, yes, shirts and coats (I'd like to see present-day Red Wolf William Talltrees brave his home Montana winters without it), but since contact with European settlers, many aboriginal people had begun dressing in European-style dress, a number that only increased as the two (to oversimplify it) groups co-existed, intermingled, and came together to form the distinct aboriginal people, the Métis.

By 1872, in fact, the Métis had led an uprising in their native Canada, resulting in the creation of the province of Manitoba. A year after Marvel's series, in 1873, Métis leader Louis Riel was elected to Canada's Parliament. Some of the most significant political actions of a people and a nation occurred in this time, all while wearing shirts. So Red Wolf's 1872 dress is potentially anachronistic, even by the standards of history.



Doc Shaner

Red Wolf's 1872 dress is even more troubling when compared to the other stars of the book itself. Bruce, Steve and the other characters get to wear suits and, a few small period details aside, don't look that far removed from the present day. They look, for lack of a better term, civilized. Compared to that, having the aboriginal character dressed in warpaint and a loincloth sends one key message: he's "savage."

That word has consistently plagued aboriginal people for centuries, and been used to justify any number of crimes and cruelties against us. It's patently obvious Marvel isn't *trying* to invoke that, but they are invoking it.

If that dress is problematic in the setting of 1872, imagine how bad it looks in a modern-day Marvel universe. If a lot of aboriginal people didn't dress like that in the late nineteenth century, it's safe to say that we don't *now*, either. We're a modern people. And standing in the same field as Captain America, Iron Man, Spider-Man, Ms. Marvel and the other characters, one thing Red Wolf certainly doesn't look is modern. He looks out of place, and he makes *me* feel out of place.



David Marquez

So why does this imagery persist, even when it's clearly inappropriate, even when one would think that a moment of sober second thought would advise against its use?

American-Canadian aboriginal author and scholar Thomas King makes an argument about that in his award-winning 2012 nonfiction book [*The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*](#). In the book, King talks about three broad distinctions of aboriginal people: Legal Indians (those who have legal status and the right to a formal relationship with the government), Live Indians (aboriginal people as we are now, in all our complexities and multitudes) and Dead Indians.

Now, the term Dead Indian doesn't *only* invoke all the actually, physically not-living-anymore aboriginal people. King uses it to mean the image of aboriginal people as we were, and as we are usually remembered: feathers, warpaint, buckskin and all. Dead Indians, King argues, are easier than Live Indians. They don't change. There's a convenient iconography. It's a fantastic symbol — if you ignore the part where it reinforces ideas of “civilized” and “savage,” and interferes with efforts to view aboriginal people as we *actually exist* in society now. Dead Indians, King argues, are just plain *easier*, which is why they persist long after it ever being appropriate. They're clipart.

Red Wolf looks even more out of place on that promo image when you compare him to who he's standing next to. Sam Wilson *is* Captain America, full stop. Miles and Gwen *are* their spider-personas. Thor is simply Thor. Immediately to the left of Red Wolf is Ms Marvel, the poster child for the modern, diverse Marvel Comics. She looks strong and powerful, and while her costume is a nod to her Muslim American upbringing, it's definitely from a modern context. You can look at Kamala and see how her background is reflected in her costume, but it's not the primary visual identifier. She looks like a *superhero*. More importantly, she looks like someone I could meet. Red Wolf looks like a Dead Indian.

Of course, this is just a promotional image. We don't know how Red Wolf will be included in All New, All Different Marvel or, for that matter, how he'll be included in *Secret Wars: 1872*. We don't know what books he'll be in, who the creative team will be, or who *he* will be.

My point is, this could end up being something smart and progressive, potentially even from an aboriginal creator. This could be *exactly* what I asked for.

But it doesn't look like it. This is just a promotional image, but it's *the* image that Marvel decided to sell their diversity with. It's *the* image they decided to present of an aboriginal person in 2015. It's an *Injun*.

Axel Alonso is right, that image of Red Wolf “resembles the Marvel Universe that 60 years of readers have come to love.” The problem is, that's not necessarily a good thing.

Read More: <http://comicsalliance.com/all-new-all-different-red-wolf-marvel/?trackback=tsmclip>

As Native schools struggle across U.S., grad rate soars at Jemez charter



Walatowa Charter High School students Tyrell Vigil, left, and Marley Perea make drums under the watchful eye of science teacher Kristina kommander. Robert Nott/The New Mexican



Walatowa Charter High School senior Kaylanah Shendo presents a PowerPoint report on maintaining the Jemez language during the last week of school. Robert Nott/The New Mexican

Posted: Saturday, June 6, 2015 7:00 pm | *Updated: 4:30 pm, Sun Jun 7, 2015.*

By Robert Nott
The New Mexican

JEMEZ PUEBLO — When Jemez Pueblo student Marley Perea entered Walatowa Charter High School in the ninth grade, she was reading at the seventh-grade level. Now, she prepares to enter her senior year with her reading on par with a college student.

“School is not my favorite thing to do,” Perea said. “I’m not a big fan of writing or English. But the teachers there really pushed me and helped me. Everyone at Walatowa is really close. I guess you could say they’re like a second family.”

She plans to graduate next year and go to college. She does not know what she will study but said she wants to bring whatever she learns back to the school as a gift for what it has given her — confidence in herself.

She is not alone.

As Native American students across the country continue to lag behind their non-Native peers in educational achievement, this small charter school, which for years has operated out of three portable buildings among the sandy red hills of Jemez Pueblo, has found remarkable success in making sure its students graduate.

The graduation rate for Native Americans nationally hovers at about 50 percent — compared to just over 80 percent for all U.S. students. But at Walatowa, the graduation rate is 91 percent — a figure that outranks the state average for Native American graduates (64 percent) and most other charter schools in New Mexico. All but five of the school’s 68 students are Native American.

Principal Arrow Wilkinson likes to call Walatowa “the little school that could.”

Students credit Walatowa’s small, welcoming community — which stresses the teaching of Native values, culture and the pueblo’s traditional language, Towa.

The school is not well-known outside of the Jemez Valley, and it doesn’t have its own permanent facility. But school and pueblo leaders, who dedicated themselves to creating their own charter school about 15 years ago, believe they are slowly making a difference in the lives of the teens there.

The key to the school’s success, Wilkinson believes, is “positive relationships between faculty and students. And belief that every student can achieve. They won’t fail because we won’t let them.”

The school started as a dream envisioned by pueblo leaders in 1999. “We wanted to have a little more say in the curriculum we develop and keep in mind our language and where we came from,” said Jemez Pueblo Gov. Raymond Loretto.

The local school board initially denied the pueblo’s application for a district charter back then. So Loretto and others went to the state to approve its charter instead. Walatowa opened in 2003 in a few rooms of the pueblo’s civic center with 18 students.

Maintaining the pueblo's language — which is oral and not written down — from generation to generation remains a concern for the school. "We don't have the advantage of teaching our children with books," said Kaylanah Shendo, valedictorian of the Class of 2015, which graduated May 15. She credits the school with encouraging her to go to college, where she wants to study linguistics so she can return to the pueblo and help keep the language alive. Her senior presentation covered the concerns the pueblo has regarding a potential language loss.

A 2014 lawsuit filed by several school districts and individuals against the state that asks the court to force legislators to put more money into education notes that some schools serving Native Americans are not able to teach them their Native language because of the time and effort needed to meet testing mandates.

Wilkinson said that's not quite the case at Walatowa. "It [testing] hasn't curbed efforts," he said. "We just have to be more purposeful. It has curbed the overall general classroom instruction time. But that has not directly affected our efforts to promote Native traditions and language. We adjust our daily school calendar and testing windows to accommodate any cultural activities. We pull from other time slots, and the instructors infuse the community values within the daily lesson plans."

Still, the school faces its share of challenges. For one thing, the school does not have its own permanent facility. The cost of such a building falls upon the pueblo leadership and administration, as well as the community. The school has set up a nonpermanent capital fund through the New Mexico Community Foundation to start raising money, but it will be a long haul, according to school leaders.

And though the school earned a C in the state's most recent A-F school grading system report, it received an F for the growth rate of its lowest-performing students, hurting its overall grade. In terms of proficiency in both reading and math, most Walatowa students' state Standards Based Assessment scores fall below 20 percent — which is in line with national statistics for Native American students.

But school leaders argue that their own internal short-cycle assessments show students are slowly making gains. The sophomore class, for example, displayed an average reading grade improvement of 1.2 percent to 5.5 percent over the course of one year on two different reading assessment programs. And the majority of its students are now nearing proficiency in both math and reading.

The school maintains small class sizes in the 10- to 15-pupil range. The teachers know their students and work with Wilkinson and others to quickly address problems like truancy, bullying and poor academic achievement.

During a recent school visit, students were engaged in presenting their senior thesis papers on PowerPoint. They had freedom in choosing the topics, which tie into issues and challenges Native youth are facing — for example, "How do we solve Jemez's drinking problem?" One student wrote on "The history and origins of Pueblo baseball."

Other students were outside on a porch behind one of the portable buildings creating Native drums as part of a class that combined visual arts with ethnobotany under the guidance of pueblo drum-maker Arnold Herrera and science teacher Kristina Kommander. She ran into Herrera down by the river one day and just asked him to come help her teach the class — that sort of thing happens at Walatowa a lot.

A village elder was visiting the school that day to drill the students in Towa.

Wilkinson's office doubles as a radio station for the school, the testing center and — when an athletic practice or event is happening — the locker room. He keeps a bucket of stucco under his desk in case he has to make some quick repairs to the walls after students horse around in that locker room.

Funding remains a problem. The school wants to hire reading and math tutors to help raise student test scores, as well as a certified Jemez language instructor. And because Jemez is not a gaming pueblo, it does not have the financial resources to offer its students college scholarships, as some other pueblos do.

Yet everyone involved in the school expresses satisfaction at incorporating Pueblo traditions into the classroom.

“Here the kids are able to practice their culture,” Herrera said.

Even non-Native students have found in the school an environment where they can thrive.

Senior Dominique Chavez, who graduated in May, said Walatowa is the reason she earned her high school diploma, as well as 32 extra college credits. School hadn't been working for her when she attended classes in both the Jemez Valley and Bernalillo school districts. At one point during those years, she was suspended for more than 100 days. “I was never at school. I was at home,” she said.”

Thanks to the efforts of Walatowa's leaders and educators, she said, she is heading to The University of New Mexico to study nursing this August.

“Walatowa gave me the opportunity to get better, to show that I could do it,” she said.

Direct Link: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/education/as-native-schools-struggle-across-u-s-grad-rate-soars/article_d789aca6-0c1c-584c-b5ce-a975f48c4410.html

Following the Trail of Tears in a covered wagon

[Drew Douglas](#)

POSTED: 10:25 PM CDT Jun 06, 2015

BATTLEFIELD, Mo. -

The Trail of Tears cuts across Missouri like a long forgotten scar.

In Battlefield on Saturday, some people gathered to remember the history of the tens of thousands of Native Americans forcibly removed from their homes in the southeast U.S. in the 1830's, and escorted on a death march by the US Army to Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

One route of the Trail of Tears passes right through the middle of Battlefield.

"Everybody knows about Wilson Creek over here, but nobody knows about the trail of tears and that's kinda sad," says Robert Tallbird, a local man who is passionate about preserving Missouri's Native American history.

Tallbird says he is honored to meet two people riding a covered wagon along the entire trail. The couple in the wagon are Gene Glasscock and Noqah Elisi. They are trying to cover 10 miles a day, as they get to know the path of their Cherokee ancestors.

This weekend they've made camp at the Trail of Tears Park next to Battlefield City Hall.

Glasscock, who is in his 80's, says he built the wagon 6 years ago to criss-cross the country pulled by his 3 mules. Glasscock says this trip is deeply personal.

"It's helping me find my identity more, because I never felt like I belonged in the white man's world, and I never felt like I belonged in the Native American world," says Glasscock.

Noqah Elisi says the trip is a way to remember both her son who died 2 years ago, and her ancestors who survived the trail of tears.

"It has become a journey of honoring my grandmothers. They lived through a horrific genocidal act. They had the courage to live," says Elisi.

In their wagon made of wood and used car parts, they retrace the path along which thousands of Native Americans suffered and died.

"It's important to know how your ancestors lived, what happened to them, their story. To honor them and to give thanks for that because you're here because of that," says Elisi.

The wagon is camped in Battlefield through the weekend and Monday they plan to resume travelling 10 miles a day, following country roads as close to the original trail as possible.

Direct Link: http://www.ky3.com/news/local/following-the-trail-of-tears-in-a-covered-wagon/21048998_33443112

When Will Native American Food Finally Get Its Due?

by [Tove Danovich](#) Jun 8, 2015, 2:00p

How Native American food is the "original farm-to-table."

The American palate is expanding. Over the last few decades, formerly exotic foods like raw fish have gone from "gross" to grocery store staple: [According to market research by IBISWorld](#), the sushi industry, for example, has grown 2.5 percent every year since 2009. Yet there's one key cuisine that has somehow gotten lost along the way — and we don't even need to go far to find it. The cuisine? Native American — perhaps **the most truly local style of cooking** around.

Though there are restaurants that focus on certain styles of Native American food — from frybread houses to fine dining — they're few and far between. Even New York City, one of the culinary capitals of the United States, has boasted only one such restaurant, the now-defunct Silverbird, which opened in the mid-'80s. It says something that one of the few Native restaurants on the East Coast is housed in the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C.

"We're the original farm-to-table." — Potawatomi tribe member/chef Loretta Barrett Oden

The supposed Native American food resurgence has been brewing for the last decade — reflected in growing media coverage, the opening of new restaurants, and acclaimed non-Native chefs exploring the cuisine (Chicago's Michelin-starred Elizabeth is launching a series of Native American [tribute dinners later this summer](#)). But if there was ever a time for this cuisine to rise into the spotlight, it's now. Many of the [best restaurants in the world](#) feature foraged and/or local, seasonal foods on their menus. In the United States, these restaurants often fall under the "New American" culinary genre — but their cooking has more in common with the French approach than anything on this continent. But with diners more acutely aware of the ideas of farm-to-table, locavore dining, it might be the moment for a few plucky restaurants around the country to change that. As Loretta Barrett Oden, member of the Potawatomi tribe, chef, and Emmy-award winning host of [PBS' *Seasoned with Spirit*](#) says, "We're the original farm-to-table."

Top: Navajo women bake bread in New Mexico, photo: Robert Alexander/Archive Photos/Getty Images. Bottom: Two dishes on the menu at Washington DC's Mitsitam Native Foods Cafe; photos: Chris Maddaloni/CQ-Roll Call

What is Native American food?

An important issue to address in talking about Native cuisines is that there isn't just one. Given the size of the United States, this shouldn't come as a surprise. (China, a country only slightly smaller than the U.S., carries at least eight distinct styles of food under the "Chinese" umbrella.)

Today, there are 566 [federally recognized Indian Nations](#) — though, of course, there used to be many more — and there are regional (if not tribal) differences between food preparations and ingredients. Yet it's actually easier to define Native cooking than many other cuisines. According to many Native chefs, there seem to be two main rules: use only foods indigenous to your area, and use simple cooking techniques like smoking, drying, stewing, or putting food in direct contact with fire.

Unfortunately, this doesn't mean the general public has any idea of what Native cuisine actually is. Barrett Oden, who still **regularly encounters stereotypes** about Native culture, believes Americans are "undereducated about Native America as a whole." "They think we wear feathers and eat frybread and possum," she says. In the early 1990s, when she opened her first restaurant, Corn Dance Café, in Santa Fe, New Mexico citizens had little concept of either Native or local foods. "People thought it was going to be really weird and off the beaten path — like Andrew Zimmern eating bugs and that kind of thing," Barrett Oden remarks. "But it's not. It's just great, wonderful food that happens to be indigenous to some place in the Americas."

Today, many Native chefs focus on what's known as a pre-colonization menu — the foods that were eaten before European settlers came to the Americas. That means no factory-produced white flours, processed sugars, and dairy, and no farmed meats like beef, pork, and chicken. This is the approach taken by Sean Sherman, member of the Oglala Lakota (also known as Oglala Sioux) nation and owner of Minneapolis catering company Sioux Chef as well as an [upcoming food truck](#) focused on Native cuisine. "I try to **remove as much European influence and ingredients** as possible," he says. "It's been a real minimalistic style of cooking."

"People thought it was going to be really weird — Andrew Zimmern eating bugs and that kind of thing."

Though he grew up on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, Sherman did a lot of outside research to discover the full scale of ingredients and cooking techniques available to him in pre-colonial, Native cuisine. He knew that Native Americans in particular had a "vast knowledge of plant identification and usage" and began talking to elders and picking up any cookbook he could find to replicate some of that know-how. "It's a

lifetime of education to figure everything out," Sherman says, noting he finds new plants and techniques every year.

According to Barrett Oden, the fact that *Vegetarian Times* and similar magazines were among the first to promote Corn Dance Café's menu shows how plant-based and healthy many Native dishes are. Corn, squash, and beans — often referred to as "the three sisters" because they thrive when grown together — appeared together in many menu items. Then there are the game meats like buffalo and rack of rabbit.

Yet many foods at Native restaurants seem quite familiar, and not just because they're being interpreted for a modern palate. In some areas (namely the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest) what people think of as regional food **owes strong debts** to Native cuisine. Fernando Divina, co-author of *Foods of the Americas: Native Recipes and Traditions*, sees examples of Native foods everywhere. Popcorn, planked salmon cooked over alder wood, the chili dishes of the Southwest, and even the Northeast's maple sugar pie are all "offspring of indigenous dishes," he says.

Bettina Sandoval, the Cultural Arts and Education Coordinator for the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, sees Southwestern food as a hodgepodge of influences. "It's actually Mexican, Spanish, American, and Native cuisines combined." Any time you see blue corn, a dish like grits, dried foods, jerky, or stews on a menu, there's been a Native influence. The Cultural Center where Sandoval works has a unique partnership with the Pueblo Harvest Café it houses. Both are owned by a partnership of 19 local pueblos, or southwest Native nations. To bring the two together, the Center offers culinary tours. They consist of a visit to a community garden (which features the three sisters and other Native gardening techniques) and the restaurant where Native food and culture actually comes to life. As Barrett Oden says of her own experience introducing outsiders to Native cuisine, "It's a wonderful, gentle way of heightening people's awareness of who we are as people and what the culture is about."

What about frybread?

Yet while a pre-colonial perspective has been popular in Native American fine dining, much like other Americans, many Native people have gotten away from traditional (and often time-consuming) methods of cooking. One of the **most contentious foods** associated with Native Americans is something known as "frybread," essentially dough fried in a thick bath of lard or other shortening. It may be the most well-known Native "dish," even though its origins hark back to one of the most painful periods of Native American and U.S. relations. "The Long Walk" was an Indian removal project that lasted from 1864-1866 and forced the Arizona Navajo people to walk 300 miles to "relocate" in New Mexico. Their food and animals were either left behind or destroyed. To keep them from starving completely, the government offered ration boxes of cheap commodity foods like lard and flour. From this comes frybread.

Unlike the fine-dining approach taken by Barrett Oden, Sherman, Divina, and others, frybread doesn't require specialized culinary training. This is likely one of the reasons for

its popularity. It also makes running a frybread house a business model that's accessible to a historically low-income population. ([According to U.S. Census data from 2013](#), the median household income for Native Americans and Alaskan Natives was only \$36,641, compared to \$52,250 for the United States as a whole.)

While some chefs like Barrett Oden refuse to serve frybread ("I am the biggest opponent of frybread you'll find," she says), many Natives embrace it. Today most tribes have some version of frybread, and if you stumble across a Native American restaurant, it's more likely to be one that specializes in this dish than not. A Denver restaurant called Tocabe offers choices of stuffed frybread, frybread nuggets, and a sugared dessert frybread on its small menu. The Pueblo Harvest Café serves so-called "Indian Tacos" using frybread. Phoenix's Fry Bread House [even won a 2012 James Beard America's Classics Award](#) for its food.

Black Sheep Café, a casual restaurant in Provo, Utah serves frybread with its soup. Like all native people, Black Sheep's chef Mark Daniel Mason is well aware of both the poor health effects associated with frybread (Native Americans have [above-average rates](#) of diet-related disease like Type 2 Diabetes, much of which is attributed to poor post-removal diets), as well as the conflicting emotions it brings up. Personally, he thinks that despite the history, what the Native people have done with frybread deserves celebration. "It can be absolutely tender and represents culinary evolution," he says. The frybread people eat today has been passed down "through the hands of a lot of Native American mothers and grandmothers."

Why aren't there more restaurants?

Though some Native restaurants have come and gone, it's hard to tell how many closures resulted from a lack of consumer enthusiasm. In a business notorious for the high failure rate, restaurants featuring Native American cuisine have the benefit of still being novel — and popular. Barrett Oden's restaurant successfully operated for 10 years before she closed it to move closer to her grandchildren. The Pueblo Harvest Café has been open since the 1970s. Many chefs looking at the popularity of New Nordic or New American cuisine believe that the time is ripe for Native foods to move to the forefront. Though people love trying new foods, eaters tend to like some aspect of the familiar. These New Native chefs who combine indigenous ingredients into familiar salads, roasts, and stews are doing just that. At one of Divina's restaurants, he moved away from French terminology to describe Native-inspired dishes and focused on "the provenance of ingredients" instead. At the time, tapas were quite popular and he snuck in unfamiliar ingredients through that recognizable format. "You can't challenge people too radically until they trust you," he says.

Black Sheep Café purposefully describes itself as a Southwestern restaurant with Native American influence. "I'm taking a lot of well-known dishes and slowly, methodically incorporating some Native American ingredients and approaches to the food," Mason says, adding, "people will keep coming back for familiar food."

"We need to push Native restaurants... all that's opening now are more frybread houses."

Barrett Oden travels throughout the United States cooking once-off dinners of Native American foods and believes the cuisine could become popular anywhere. "It's a cuisine that people, once they are exposed to it, absolutely love," she says. And it's not just diners but classically trained chefs who she's exposing to indigenous ingredients like *acholla* tree buds, *huitlacoche*, or game meats. "We need to push Native restaurants because all that's opening now are more frybread houses," Barrett Oden says. As she sees it, the only thing keeping new restaurants from opening is the one thing all aspiring restaurateurs have in common — lack of capital. And convincing investors to spend the amount of money needed to open a restaurant in a major city is difficult enough when you're not working with a relatively unknown cuisine.

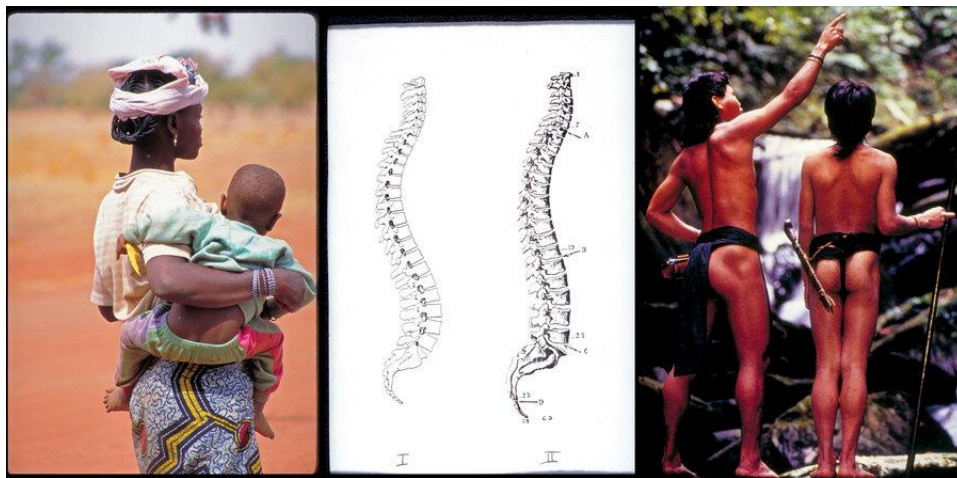
But the ingredients and methods that define Native American cooking also make it a no-brainer for today's eaters — especially the pre-colonial variety. It's made from local foods without modern processed ingredients like white flour, white sugar, or industrial yeasts. Native cooking can easily be vegetarian- or vegan-friendly, gluten-free, low-fat, paleo, and totally delicious. The only real barrier may just be the fact that few people have heard of it. As Barrett Oden says, "In this country, Native American food is the only ethnicity not represented in the culinary world." Perhaps the times are finally changing.

Direct Link: <http://www.eater.com/2015/6/8/8716011/native-american-food-restaurants-resurgence>

Lost Posture: Why Some Indigenous Cultures May Not Have Back Pain

June 08, 2015 3:25 AM ET

[Michaeleen Doucleff](#)



Primal posture: Ubong tribesmen in Borneo (right) display the perfect J-shaped spines. A woman in Burkina Faso (left) holds her baby so that his spine stays straight. The center image shows the S-shaped spine drawn in a modern anatomy book (Fig. I) and the J-shaped spine (Fig. II) drawn in the 1897 anatomy book *Traite d'Anatomie Humaine*.

Courtesy of Esther Gokhale and Ian Mackenzie/Nomads of the Dawn

Back pain is a tricky beast. Most Americans will at some point have a problem with their backs. And for an [unlucky third](#), treatments won't work, and the problem will become chronic.

Believe it or not, there are a few cultures in the world where back pain hardly exists. One indigenous tribe in central India reported essentially none. And the discs in their backs [showed](#) little signs of degeneration as people aged.



Many ancient statues, such as this one from Greece, display a J-shaped spine. The statue's back is nearly flat until the bottom, where it curves so the buttocks are behind the spine.

An acupuncturist in Palo Alto, Calif., thinks she has figured out why. She has traveled around the world studying cultures with low rates of back pain — how they stand, sit and walk. Now she's sharing their secrets with back pain sufferers across the U.S.

About two decades ago, [Esther Gokhale](#) started to struggle with her own back after she had her first child. "I had excruciating pain. I couldn't sleep at night," she says. "I was walking around the block every two hours. I was just crippled."

Gokhale had a herniated disc. Eventually she had surgery to fix it. But a year later, it happened again. "They wanted to do another back surgery. You don't want to make a habit out of back surgery," she says.

This time around, Gokhale wanted to find a permanent fix for her back. And she wasn't convinced Western medicine could do that. So Gokhale started to think outside the box.

She had an idea: "Go to populations where they don't have these huge problems and see what they're doing."

Over the next decade, Gokhale went to cultures around the world that live far away from modern life. She went to the mountains in Ecuador, tiny fishing towns in Portugal and remote villages of West Africa.

Esther Gokhale's Five Tips For Better Posture And Less Back Pain

Try these exercises while you're working at your desk, sitting at the dinner table or walking around, Esther Gokhale recommends.

1. Do a shoulder roll: Americans tend to scrunch their shoulders forward, so our arms are in front of our bodies. That's not how people in indigenous cultures carry their arms, Gokhale says. To fix that, gently pull your shoulders up, push them back and then let them drop — like a shoulder roll. Now your arms should dangle by your side, with your thumbs pointing out. "This is the way all your ancestors parked their shoulders," she says. "This is the natural architecture for our species."

2. Lengthen your spine: Adding extra length to your spine is easy, Gokhale says. Being careful not to arch your back, take a deep breath in and grow tall. Then maintain that height as you exhale. Repeat: Breathe in, grow even taller and maintain that new height as you exhale. "It takes some effort, but it really strengthens your abdominal muscles," Gokhale says.

3. Squeeze, squeeze your glute muscles when you walk: In many indigenous cultures, people squeeze their gluteus medius muscles every time they take a step. That's one reason they have such shapely buttocks muscles that support their lower backs. Gokhale says you can start developing the same type of *derrière* by tightening the buttocks muscles when you take each step. "The gluteus medius is the one you're after here. It's the one high up on your bum," Gokhale says. "It's the muscle that keeps you perky, at any age."

4. Don't put your chin up: Instead, add length to your neck by taking a lightweight object, like a bean bag or folded washcloth, and balance it on the top of your crown. Try to push your head against the object. "This will lengthen the back of your neck and allow your chin to angle down — not in an exaggerated way, but in a relaxed manner," Gokhale says.

5. Don't sit up straight! "That's just arching your back and getting you into all sorts of trouble," Gokhale says. Instead do a shoulder roll to open up the chest and take a deep breath to stretch and lengthen the spine.

"I went to villages where every kid under age 4 was crying because they were frightened to see somebody with white skin — they'd never seen a white person before," she says.

Gokhale took photos and videos of people who walked with water buckets on their heads, collected firewood or sat on the ground weaving, for hours.

"I have a picture in my book of these two women who spend seven to nine hours everyday, bent over, gathering water chestnuts," Gokhale says. "They're quite old. But the truth is they don't have a back pain."

She tried to figure out what all these different people had in common. The first thing that popped out was the shape of their spines. "They have this regal posture, and it's very compelling."

And it's quite different than American spines.

If you look at an American's spine from the side, or profile, it's shaped like the letter S. It curves at the top and then back again at the bottom.

But Gokhale didn't see those two big curves in people who don't have back pain. "That S shape is actually not natural," she says. "It's a J-shaped spine that you want."

In fact, if you look at drawings from Leonardo da Vinci — or a [Gray's Anatomy](#) book from 1901 — the spine isn't shaped like a sharp, curvy S. It's much flatter, all the way down the back. Then at the bottom, it curves to stick the buttocks out. So the spine looks more like the letter J.

"The J-shaped spine is what you see in Greek statues. It's what you see in young children. It's good design," Gokhale says.

So Gokhale worked to get her spine into the J shape. And gradually her back pain went away.

Then Gokhale realized she could [help others](#). She developed a set of exercises, wrote a [book](#) and set up a studio in downtown Palo Alto.

Now her list of clients is impressive. She's helped YouTube CEO [Susan Wojcicki](#) and Matt Drudge of the [Drudge Report](#). She has given classes at Google, Facebook and companies across the country. In Silicon Valley, she's known as the "posture guru."

Each year, doctors in the Bay Area refer hundreds of patients to Gokhale. One of them is [Dr. Neeta Jain](#), an internist at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. She puts Gokhale's method in the same category as Pilates and yoga for back pain. And it doesn't bother her that the method hasn't been tested in a clinical trial.



Healthy spines in the Western world: The J-shaped spine is often seen in photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"If people are finding things that are helpful, and it's not causing any harm, then why do we have to wait for a trial?" Jain asked.

But there's still a big question looming here: Is Gokhale right? Have people in Western cultures somehow forgotten the right way to stand?

Scientists don't know yet, says [Dr. Praveen Mummaneni](#), a neurosurgeon at the University of California, San Francisco's Spine Center. Nobody has done a study on traditional cultures to see why some have lower rates of back pain, he says. Nobody has even documented the shape of their spines.

"I'd like to go and take X-rays of indigenous populations and compare it to people in the Western world," Mummaneni says. "I think that would be helpful."

But there's a whole bunch of reasons why Americans' postures — and the shape of their spines — may be different than those of indigenous populations, he says. For starters, Americans tend to be much heavier.

"If you have a lot of fat built up in the belly, that could pull your weight forward," Mummaneni says. "That could curve the spine. And people who are thinner probably have less curvature" — and thus a spine shaped more like J than an S.

Americans are also much less active than people in traditional cultures, Mummaneni says. "I think the sedentary lifestyle promotes a lack of muscle tone and a lack of postural stability because the muscles get weak."

Everyone knows that weak abdominal muscles can cause back pain. In fact, Mummaneni says, stronger muscles might be the secret to Gokhale's success.

In other words, it's not that the J-shaped spine is the ideal one — or the healthiest. It's what goes into making the J-shaped spine that matters: "You have to use muscle strength to get your spine to look like a J shape," he says.

So Gokhale has somehow figured out a way to teach people to build up their core muscles without them even knowing it. "Yes, I think that's correct," Mummaneni says. "You're not going to be able to go from the S- to the J-shaped spine without having good core muscle strength. And I think that's key here."

So indigenous people around the world don't have a magic bullet for stopping back pain. They've just got beefy abdominal muscles, and their lifestyle helps to keep them that way, even as they age.

Direct Link: <http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/06/08/412314701/lost-posture-why-indigenous-cultures-dont-have-back-pain>

This Chef Is Celebrating Native American Heritage with Tacos

By [Johanna Derry](#)

June 9, 2015 / 8:00 am

Everyone knows American food: dirty burgers with pickles, fried chicken, doughnuts, deep pan pizza. Anything carb-based, fried, and liberally doused in sugar, right?

Well, not exactly. *Real* American food is clean, nutritious, organic, and local.

That's if you consider, as chef Sean Sherman does, "American food" to be the dishes eaten by Native American peoples before the arrival of Europeans.

Together with [Little Earth](#), an organisation supporting Native American tribes in Minneapolis, Sherman is bringing the original American cuisine to Minneapolis with the help of a food truck called "Tatanka," meaning "buffalo" in the Lakota language.



Serving traditional food and locally sourced ingredients, [Tatanka](#)'s dishes include a wild rice or cornmeal base with rabbit, bison, duck, turkey, walleye, or trout, and topping of wild greens.

"I got to a point where I thought it was silly that there weren't any Native American restaurants out there at all," Sherman explains.

An Oglala Lakota Sioux, Sherman grew up on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the third largest Native American reservation in the US. He worked in restaurants around Mount Rushmore before becoming a chef and moving to Minneapolis. It was there that he discovered the local organic movement.



Chef Sean Sherman preparing dishes for the Tatanka food truck. All photos by the author.

As luck would have it, it was around this time that Nathan Ratner, Director of Partnerships and Strategy at Minneapolis's Little Earth community, was looking for a chef who could make native food accessible.

"We needed a chef who had a strong sense of what indigenous food means, what it looks like and needs to taste like," he explains. "As it turns out, there was exactly one chef who fit that vision and it was Sean. It felt like it was ordained."

Given that most large US cities boast restaurants serving food from all over the world, it seems strange that Native American food is widely overlooked. You've probably dipped injera or slurped laksa, but have you ever tried a Sioux walleye dish?



"I think a large part of why there aren't a lot of Native American restaurants is because many of these communities are still struggling and recovering from the loss of their culture, which happened in a lot of places less than 100 years ago," says Sherman.

When looking for a space in which to launch Tatanka, Sherman and Ratner needed to be sensitive to this.

"We looked into a bricks-and-mortar restaurant but we wanted to introduce native food both to the city and to native communities, to make it accessible and to de-formalise it," Ratner explains. "A food truck was the optimal way to do that."

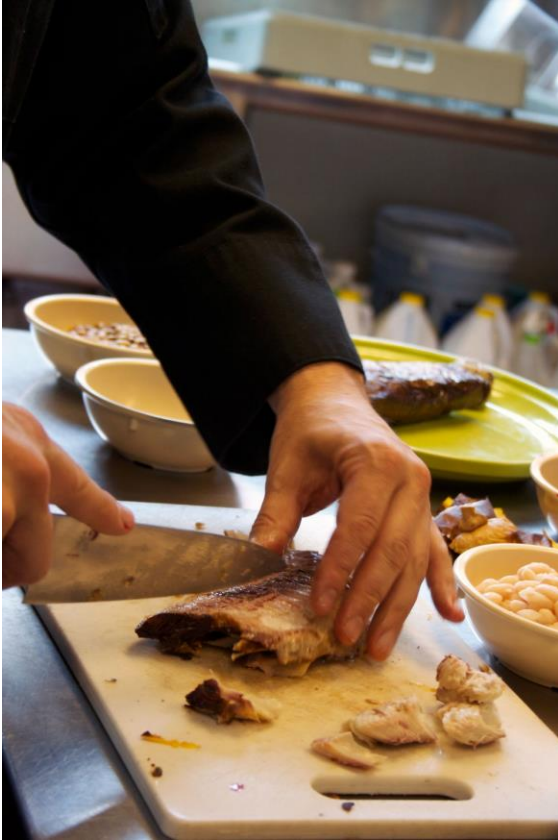


The food truck's signature dish is a grilled, open-face taco made with steamed cornmeal.

“We’re calling it ‘Indigenous Taco’ and it’s completely healthy,” says Ratner. “Nothing’s deep fried. There’s no flour, no sugar, no sour cream.”

Tatanka doesn’t sell sodas either, just maple water and infusions of cedar, spruce, cranberry, and sage. The menu may sound simple but it represents years of research by Sherman to uncover the traditional dishes his ancestors would have made.

“I tried to find every book on Native American cooking I could, but every time it was buffalo meatloaf or wild rice risotto, and all these recipes that didn’t feel authentic,” he says. “I wasn’t going back to 1492 or looking into prehistoric native cultures, I was just trying to find the foods of my great grandfather, who grew up traditional and never spoke a word of English.”



The foods Sherman's ancestors ate were tied closely to the land, and so Tatanka focuses on micro-regional ingredients.

"We've cut out all processed sugars, dairy, beef, pork, and chicken. We're not using processed wheat flour," he explains. This also means the food is incredibly healthy, something Sherman says is particularly beneficial for Native American people.

"By removing processed sugar and fructose syrups, it's a healthy step and no processed flours means it's great for people on a gluten-free diet," he explains. "But it's especially good for Native Americans. Genetically, they are really efficient at breaking down energy from food that doesn't have much of it to get the sugars their bodies need."



During the 1800s, as native populations were [moved onto reservations miles away from their original food sources](#), diets also shifted. No longer able to engage in hunting and gathering practices and introduced to European staples such as flour and lard, Native American nutritional health suffered. Today [nearly one in three Native Americans are obese](#) and half the women in this group also count as overweight.

“[Native Americans] were introduced to things like fried bread and the way their genes and insulin were working, it all turned into fat,” says Sherman. “Native populations began to experience obesity that was never there before, and we saw a huge rise in diabetes, because their bodies aren’t able to break down that kind of diet.”



As well as introducing the street food aficionados of Minneapolis to a taste of their own landscape, the Tatanka truck will be travelling to Native American reservations in Minnesota. Sherman hopes this will give indigenous populations a chance to sample native foods and learn more about healthy diet.

“People like to think that we’re doing something really exotic because we’re going against the grain,” says Sherman. “But there’s a world of knowledge and information that’s been here forever. It’s all around us and always has been. This is the food of my great grandfather and it just happens to be healthy because it’s really clean and super-regional. You can’t get more Minnesotan than that really.”

Direct Link: <https://munchies.vice.com/articles/this-chef-is-celebrating-native-american-heritage-with-tacos>

Native Americans try to block Paris auction

[AFP](#)

Jun. 9, 2015, 8:54 AM



Katsina Hapota mask is displayed during an auction of sacred objects from the Hopi and San Carlos Apache Native American tribes in Paris on December 9, 2013

Paris (AFP) - Two Native American tribes, the Hopi and Acoma, are trying to block an auction taking place in Paris this week of artefacts they consider sacred, despite failing in several similar efforts over past years.

Allied with the US-based Holocaust Art Restitution Project (HARP), the Hopi Tribe Council and Pueblo of Acoma said in a joint statement they were asking France's Board of Auction Sales to suspend the event, taking place on Wednesday.

"These objects cannot be sold or disposed of for legal, cultural and moral reasons, period. We will file all relevant actions to preserve the Acoma and the Hopi rights before French jurisdictions," HARP chairman Ori Soltes said.

"These auctions must cease," Hopi Tribe chairman Herman Honanie said, demanding that all the objects "be returned".

The Paris sale, handled by the Drouot auction house, covers a dozen masks and statues made by the Hopi and Acoma tribes. Some of the pieces are estimated to be worth tens of thousands of euros.

Since 2013, Native American tribes, with the backing of the US embassy in Paris, have tried unsuccessfully four times to stop the sale in France of similar items. The last such sale was in Paris last December.

The tribes invoke US laws and allege that the artefacts were fraudulently exported to France.

But French auctioneers have certified the legality of each of the items for sale. Some note that Hopi people themselves were behind sales of thousands of their masks in a trade that grew quickly at the end of the 19th century.

Several experts stress that most of the masks belonged to individuals and no law allows for tribal ownership of them.

The Hopi and Acoma tribes are recognised by the US government. The 18,000 Hopis live in northwest Arizona, while the Pueblo Acoma is located in New Mexico.

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-native-americans-try-to-block-paris-auction-2015-6#ixzz3cbPGQMgf>

6/9/2015 10:06:00 AM

Native American start-up business aims to clean up Rez and turn a profit



Katherine Locke
Reporter

TUBA CITY, Ariz. - Tyler Tawahongva hopes people's trash becomes a successful business for him on the reservation. He hopes to take Cloud Nine Recycling to the next level with help from a green business start-up award and a GoFundMe campaign.



Tyler Tawahongva stands amid piles of material to be recycled. Photo/Donovan Quintero

Cloud is Tawahongva's Hopi name. Cloud Nine is a state of bliss, a positive state, according to Tawahongva.

With help from mentor Jessica Stago, senior business counselor for Native American Business Incubator Network (NABIN), and Grand Canyon Trust, Tawahongva landed a Green Business in Indian Country Start-up Award from Colorado-based NGO Trees, Water, People. He now has a website, the right to enter into contracts on the reservation and an accounting structure in place.

He launched a one-month crowd funding campaign in June to raise \$5,000 to buy a

13-foot box truck to replace rental fees.

Tawahongva transformed the dusty lot surrounding his trailer into a neatly ordered junkyard of cardboard, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and disemboweled electronics, which he mines for steel, aluminum, and especially copper wire, which can fetch over two dollars per pound.

He travels from Tuba City to Flagstaff to rent a truck, drives back to Tuba City to load the material he has collected from the waste transfer station in Tuba City and from other businesses and organizations and drives it south to Phoenix. While that is a long way, he said he is trying to make a living and that was the cheaper option at first.

"I do what I have to do," Tawahongva said. "It is a necessary evil. I don't see any other way to get the stuff out of here."

But he said a truck will help him cut costs, save time and make his business more efficient.

"We figured that a lot of the overhead is going to rental trucks," Tawahongva said. "The cost has to be low enough in order to make it profitable. I can't rent a truck for \$200 or more, I'm going to lose money because all my profit is going to go into that."

With the price fluctuating on rental trucks, he has had to wait until a reasonable price comes around, which could take a few weeks. With his own truck, he will not be at the mercy of the rental company prices.

"If we can do a haul when we have enough product, then we're not waiting for the company to lower their price," Tawahongva said.

While at first he concentrated on cardboard, Tawahongva said he also collected metal and cans to recycle. In 2014, he hauled over 40,000 pounds of cardboard and paper. Now, with the price of cardboard down, he also wants to focus on metals and other small appliances that will bring in money, too.

"Pretty much anything that I could make money off of," he said.

But, he also wants to help people think differently about trash - to manage waste on the reservation.

He began at the waste transfer station in Tuba City, which has a couple of bins for cardboard and paper recycling. He noticed that those bins would fill up in less than a week. Because of that, material that could be recycled was ending up in the trash.

"I stepped in to pull out the excess cardboard," Tawahongva said. "That helped the flow of recyclables into those bins. I guess you could say it helped the community recycle more by helping out at that transfer station."

Before Tawahongva won the start-up award, he said he was in a real bind with cash flow problems.

"It's probably a small business dilemma, small businesses probably face dilemmas

like this, 'How am I going to get through this?' he said. "It was tight and I was desperate, so that is why I applied for it."

The award gave him enough money to continue his work. He had a backlog of cardboard because he had not been able to rent a truck to haul it away.

"It really kept things going," Tawahongva said.

He said, even with his business, there is a lot of competition and the question becomes how does one compete and make a living.

"How are we going to survive?" Tawahongva asked. "How does a Native American business survive out here?"

He is trying to create a model that works for others and he believes that if he and others can do it, or at least try, maybe they each will succeed.

"I'm trying to be a model for other entrepreneurs," Tawahongva said, adding that while most people on the reservation have business ventures that are cultural - arts and crafts - he feels that people need to expand their horizons. Recycling is one idea and a different prospect.

"It's just so new that it is uncharted territory," he said. "We're trying to map the course along the way because it is just so different. If it were arts and crafts they would know exactly what to do. But it's more of a challenge... and so volatile."

Tawahongva said the more successful he gets the more employees he can hire. He would like to expand to more areas and different chapters on the reservation and create proposals to charge monthly fees to bring in cash flow. He sees a lot of potential but he has to get through where he is now.

"I'm still in a start-up phase," he said. "It is really challenging at this point. Sort of back to that point before I got the award. We're trying to weather the storm here and get back on our feet."

But in the end, while making a living is important, Tawahongva also has another goal.

"We want to make money doing it and help the environment at the same time," he said. "There's a principal behind it and that is what drives me...hopefully I'm bringing some awareness."

Direct Link:

<http://nhonews.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&SubsectionID=1&ArticleID=16943>

Minnesota tribes press concerns over pipeline plan, wild rice

[Dan Kraker](#) · Fond du Lac Indian Reservation, Minn. · Jun 1, 2015

Several Minnesota Indian bands are upset about what they say is a lack of consultation over a proposed controversial oil pipeline across northern Minnesota.

This week, the Mille Lacs and White Earth Ojibwe bands are holding their own public hearings on plans for the Sandpiper line, a \$2.6 billion pipeline that would pump North Dakota crude 300 miles across Minnesota to its terminal in Superior, Wis., and eventually to refineries around the Great Lakes.

The tribal hearings are happening as the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission readies a major ruling on the project's need.

While the route preferred by Canadian pipeline company Enbridge Energy does not cross any Indian reservations, it does cross a large area of lakes and forests in northern Minnesota where treaties give tribes the right to hunt, fish and gather.

Tribal members say they are especially concerned about potential impacts on their right to gather wild rice. A three-hour meeting Enbridge hosted last week on the Fond du Lac Reservation was sometimes tense and emotional.

A map of the proposed Sandpiper pipeline. Courtesy of Enbridge

"If the wild rice dies, we die," said Michael Dahl, who drove four hours from the White Earth reservation to attend the meeting. "Shame on you," he shouted to Enbridge representatives.

Tanya Aubid, a Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe member who lives near the Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge near McGregor, Minn., broke down in tears as she talked about how a pipeline spill near Rice Lake would be devastating.

Ojibwe migration stories tell of how the people were told to keep moving until they came to a place where food grew on the water.

"Wild Rice is very much an integral part of our lives," she said. "It's there for us for our ceremonies, for basic daily living, and something we've had here for thousands and thousands of years."

Linda Coady, Enbridge's director of sustainability, told tribal members she'd relay their concerns to the company's senior leadership. While she didn't make any promises, Coady said she hopes Enbridge and tribes can forge a less adversarial relationship.

"There are very strong feelings; there are obviously a lot of concerns about the potential impact of a spill in relation to wild rice," she said.

"On some of the issues, we have shared values, common goals," she added. "No one wants to threaten the wild rice in Minnesota."

Enbridge has hired a tribal relations consultant. But several bands say neither Enbridge nor the state have done enough to consult with tribes.

Public hearings on the need for Sandpiper were held in Duluth, Bemidji and other cities, but not on any reservations. The White Earth Band asked the Public Utilities Commission for one. The agency declined.

This week, both the White Earth and Mille Lacs Bands will hold their own hearings on the pipeline proposal.

"We want to get our voice heard on this particular issue," said Susan Klapel, natural resources commissioner for the Mille Lacs Band.

The PUC's Dan Wolf says tribal voices have had a chance to be heard.

While he declined a recorded interview, he said in a statement that tribal members have "submitted numerous comments," adding there's been "considerable opportunity" to provide written comments.

The White Earth Band and a Native American group called Honor the Earth are formal parties to the Sandpiper proceedings before the PUC and have testified in several hearings.

But that's not enough, said Winona LaDuke, founder of Honor the Earth. The state should consult directly with tribal governments.

"Nation to nation, we should act as governing bodies between the Mille Lacs band and the White Earth band that are both holding hearings this week," she said. "But instead the PUC is just going ahead."

The utilities commission is scheduled to decide on Sandpiper's "certificate of need" on Friday. That's the same day as the Mille Lacs Band's public hearing, and just a day after White Earth's. Mille Lacs and White Earth leaders have asked the commission to delay its decision until they submit reports from their hearings.

But even if the commission rules the pipeline is needed, that's not the final say on the project. The PUC would still have to approve a final route for the pipeline, a process that will require more public hearings, and the PUC says, more chances for tribal input.

Direct Link: <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/06/01/sandpiper-wild-rice>

Native Americans fail to halt artefact auction in France

Auctioneers in Paris sell masks and statues considered sacred by Hopi and Acoma tribes, which have spent years demanding the pieces be handed over

Wednesday 10 June 2015 19.03 BST

French auctioneers have sold masks and statues considered sacred by two Native American tribes, raising more than €400,000 (\$450,000), despite fierce opposition from the indigenous groups.

The sale of 15 artefacts marked a new defeat for the Hopi and Acoma tribes, which have been trying for two years to put an end to such transactions and demanding the pieces be handed over.

The Hopi Tribe Council and Pueblo of Acoma had allied with the US-based Holocaust Art Restitution Project (Harp) this week to ask France's Board of Auction Sales to suspend the sale conducted by the Druout auction house.

They claimed the objects were illegally exported from the United States, and that their sale broke US federal laws.

But a representative of the French board said Wednesday that "the request was not deemed admissible and was rejected".

The auction thus went ahead. A prime lot – a 15th century wooden idol – was sold for €120,000.

Since 2013, Native American tribes, with the backing of the US embassy in Paris, [have tried unsuccessfully four times to stop the sale in France](#) of similar items. The previous such sale was in Paris last December.

French auctioneers have certified the legality of each of the items for sale. Some note that Hopi people themselves were behind sales of thousands of their masks in a trade that grew quickly at the end of the 19th century.

The Hopi and Acoma tribes are recognised by the US government. The 18,000 Hopis live in northwest Arizona, while the Pueblo Acoma is located in New Mexico.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/10/native-americans-artefact-auction-france>

Minnesota Native American couple challenges adoption notification laws

[By Elizabeth Mohr](#)
emohr@pioneerpress.com

Posted: 06/09/2015 12:01:00 AM CDT | Updated: 5 days ago

A local Native American couple wishing to place their newborn with a non-native family has filed a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Minnesota's adoption law, which they say could hinder their ability to make that decision.

The couple, identified in the suit as Jane and John Doe to protect their privacy, is suing the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the state Attorney General and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

They aim to stop notification of the adoption to tribal officials, required under the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act, with hopes to prevent interference with their voluntary placement.

"They're entitled to a presumption under the law that their decisions for their children are correct," said attorney Mark Fiddler, who represents the couple and has handled similar adoption cases. "And the (U.S.) Constitution doesn't tolerate some third party like the government or the tribe coming in and saying, 'We don't believe this is what's best for the child.' "

The federal Indian Child Welfare Act, passed by Congress in 1978, was created in response to large numbers of American Indian babies being removed from their homes and tribes. According to the text of the law, the intent is to "protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families.

Advertisement

" It grants tribes the right to intervene in cases of involuntary termination of parental rights.

The Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act, enacted in 1985, is the state arm of the federal law. It goes a step further in intervention rights and requires notification of tribes in adoption cases. This gives tribes "the right under the color of state law to interfere with voluntary, private adoptions," the lawsuit said.

The parents at the center of this lawsuit are "solid," Fiddler said, but they made the "tough, gut-wrenching decision" to place their child with adoptive parents. He wouldn't disclose their reasons but said that if they were any other race, their decision and autonomy would be protected.

"There's different reasons why birth parents decide to place away from their own communities," Fiddler said. "It's nothing unique. What's unique is that tribal members

have to suffer the tribal organizations coming in and second-guessing their parental decisions."

Fiddler, who is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota, added: "There's this idea that Indian children are harmed by being raised in non-Indian homes. But there's not a single peer-reviewed study that supports that allegation."

The birth parents claim that any interference in the adoption would violate the couple's rights and due process, and would deprive them of equal protection under the Constitution's 14th Amendment. They are asking the court to issue an injunction.

The couple has been in a relationship for 11 years and have other children in common. The mother is a member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the father is enrolled in an unspecified tribe, the suit said. They do not live on a reservation; they live in the Twin Cities metro.

They hid the pregnancy and their son's birth in April, and have not had their parental rights terminated. "Instead, they reached the difficult decision that adoption would be best for Baby Doe in light of their personal circumstances," the suit said. They chose to locate an adoptive family using a private agency.

The couple is concerned that notifying the tribe will erase the confidentiality of the adoption process and alert the broader community of their private adoption plans, resulting in embarrassment, pressure to deviate from their plans and possible intervention by tribal officials, according to their lawsuit.

"Jane and John Doe are profoundly worried that any attempt to interfere with their private direct placement adoption will not be in Baby Doe's best interest and will be devastating to them and the Adoptive Parents," the suit said.

Notifying the tribe could trigger another problem. There's a 60-day window in which the couple must sign off on their consent to the adoption. That expires July 8. If they are required to notify the tribes -- even if the tribes choose not to intervene -- that deadline could pass and the court would be legally required to notify child-protection officials, who would then have to investigate the case as an abandonment, Fiddler said.

That would again jeopardize the couple's privacy and their right to confidential adoption proceedings -- rights afforded to all other couples without native lineages, he said.

Fiddler said he doesn't know of any similar constitutional challenges in other states, though other states have notification requirements.

There is currently a proposal to make notices required nationally, in all states, he said.

"So the ramifications for this case, if we win and the court finds the notification requirement unconstitutional, would affect the national effort," he said.

A call to Samuel Moose, the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, was not returned Tuesday.

Direct Link: http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_28284772/minnesota-native-american-couple-challenges-adoption-notification-laws

Native American Education Goes to Congress: 7 Bills to Watch

[Tanya H. Lee](#)

6/10/15

Congress has before it several pieces of legislation that could have major impacts on the education of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian children. To participate in the process, let your state's Congressional delegation know whether you want them to support these bills.

Exemption From Budget Cuts

On June 4, Sens. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and Tom Udall, D-N.M., introduced "A bill to exempt the Indian Health Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and certain other programs for Indians from sequestration" ([S.1497](#)). This legislation would exempt Bureau of Education, among other federal agencies dealing with Native American interests, from further cuts under sequestration. It was referred to the Senate Committee on the Budget.

"Across-the-board budget cuts presented a major setback for Indian Country, forcing cuts to vital programs that New Mexico tribal communities depend on," Udall said in a news release. "We have a trust responsibility to uphold to tribes, and I'm pleased to work with Senator Tester on this legislation to ensure that important health care, education, public safety and housing programs that support economic growth in Indian Country won't be subject to future disastrous sequestration cuts."

Sequestration has already meant a \$42.2-million cut to the Bureau of Indian Education and an copy1.9 million cut to Tribal Head Start, impacting 25,000 American Indian children.

Native Language Immersion

Tester announced May 27 at the Fort Peck Indian Reservation that he has reintroduced the Native Language Immersion Student Achievement Act ([S.1948](#)), which would

establish a new Native American language grant program under the Department of Education. The \$5 million in grants each year for the next five years would be available for pre-K through college programs and would be awarded to tribes, tribal organizations and public and private schools.

The intent of the legislation is “to establish a grant program to support schools using Native American languages as the primary language of instruction of all curriculum taught at the schools that will improve high school graduation rates, college attainment, and career readiness.”

Tester said, “Native languages connect students with their culture, history and heritage. This bill increases access to critical funding for language immersion programs and ensures the survival of Native languages before it is too late.”

Languages Reauthorization Act of 2015

On a similar note, Udall and Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., and Reps. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., and Steve Pearce, R-N.M., on April 30 introduced the Native American Languages Reauthorization Act of 2015—[S.1163](#) in the Senate and [H.R.2174](#) in the House. The bill reauthorizes the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Program, established in 2006, until 2020. The legislation would continue to provide grants to Native American language educational organizations to preserve disappearing Native languages.

The reauthorization includes improvements to expand the program’s eligibility to smaller-sized classes (from 10 to 5 enrollees in Native American language nests, and from 15 to 10 enrollees in the Native American language survival schools) and allow for longer grant periods of up to 5 years. The act expired in 2012, but the program has continued to be funded pending reauthorization. This legislation has been referred to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Unique Indian Learning

In February, Udall and Lujan introduced the Building upon Unique Indian Learning and Development Act. The Senate bill ([S.410](#)) was referred to the SCIA, and the House bill ([H.R.1082](#)) has been referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The legislation would “establish an in-school facility innovation program contest in which institutions of higher education, including Tribal Colleges and Universities are encouraged to consider solving the problem of how to improve school facilities for tribal schools and schools served by the Bureau of Indian Education for problem-based learning in their coursework and through extracurricular opportunities.” It will also increase support for teachers and administrators of schools attended by Native American students and enact other provisions that would involve amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to better serve Native American students.

Native Hawaiian Education

Introduced by Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii, in early February, the Native Hawaiian Education Reauthorization Act of 2015 ([H.R.895](#)) would change the composition, duties and responsibilities of the Native Hawaiian Education Council, gives grant priority to certain programs that benefit Native Hawaiian students, including those that “meet the unique cultural and language needs of Native Hawaiian students in order to help them meet challenging state academic achievement standards.” The bill has been referred to the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education. A companion bill, [S.464](#), was introduced by Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Native American Indian Education Act

In February, Sens. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., and Michael Bennet, D-Colo., introduced [S.1390](#), the Native American Indian Education Act, which would provide states with the funding to fulfill the federal mandate that the state’s colleges and universities cover the cost of tuition for out-of-state American Indian students. The mandate was a condition under which the college or state received its original grant of land and facilities from the United States.

The legislation has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. An identical bill, [H.R.1089](#) was introduced in the House by Rep. Scott Tipton, R-Colo., and referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Appropriations. The bill has 37 co-sponsors from 17 states. Similar legislation was introduced in 2010 but failed to pass then and in subsequent years.

The out-of-state land-grant tuition waiver applies to Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, which had an American Indian student enrollment of about 800 in 2012, or 20 percent of its total student population, and to the University of Minnesota, Morris. Both schools offer tuition waivers to American Indians who live in-state. Other schools that offer free tuition to American Indian residents include the University of Maine and the University of Massachusetts, as well as public institutions of higher education in Michigan.

Teacher Loan Forgiveness

Introduced in January by Rep. Raul Ruiz, D-Calif., the American Indian Teacher Loan Forgiveness Act of 2015 ([H.R.386](#)) would give up to copy7,500 of loan forgiveness to borrowers who “are a member of an Indian tribe, and have been employed as a full-time teacher for five consecutive complete school years in an Indian school or in a local educational agency that serves at least 10 Indian students or whose schools have an enrollment of students at least 25% of which are Indians.” The bill, which has 11 co-sponsors, was referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training in late April.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/10/native-american-education-goes-congress-7-bills-watch-160611>

Pew: White-Native American Adults Largest Multiracial Group

WASHINGTON — Jun 11, 2015, 4:30 AM ET
By JESSE J. HOLLAND Associated Press



This June 11, 2008, file photo shows a person wearing bracelets supporting Sen. Barack Obama's candidacy for President. Non-Hispanic whites with American Indian ancestry make up a full half of the current population of mixed-race Americans

Non-Hispanic whites with American Indian ancestry make up a full half of the current population of mixed-race Americans but are among the least likely to say that they are multiracial, according to a study released Thursday.

This population is also the more likely to be Republican-leaning and conservative than the rest of the multiracial population, finds the study by the Pew Research Center. But they may someday be eclipsed by other multiracial Americans, with the majority of mixed-race babies born in 2013 being either biracial white and black or biracial white and Asian.

The Census Bureau estimates the number of multiracial Americans at 2.1 percent of the adult population. During its survey, Pew asked people about their race, the race of their parents and the race of their grandparents. With those numbers, however, the "Multiracial in America" report finds that 6.9 percent of the population in the United States is of mixed race.

That's a big jump from the past and points to a population that is expected to grow, said Kim Parker, Pew's director of social trends research. In 1970, among babies living with

two parents, only 1 percent had parents who were different races from each other. By 2013, that share had risen to 10 percent.

"From 2000-2010 that multiracial population grew three times as fast as the overall population," Parker said. "And when we look at the number of babies being born that are mixed race and the rise in interracial marriage, we can see that not only is it continuing to grow but the growth could accelerate in the future."

The largest group of multiracial adults is biracial white and Native American, the report said, with 50 percent of the multiracial adults claiming that dual ancestry. Black and American Indian adults make up 12 percent of the multiracial population, while those with a white and black background make up 11 percent.

The biracial white and American Indians are also the one group "whose members are the least likely to consider themselves 'multiracial,'" the report said. Biracial white-Asian adults were the most likely to say they were multiracial and to consider themselves multiracial.

For many multiracial adults, their experiences are similar to those who identify themselves as single races. For example, 40 percent of mixed-race adults with a black background said they have been unfairly stopped by the police because of their racial background. However, only 6 percent of biracial white and Asian adults and 15 percent of white and American Indian adults said they have had this experience.

Racial identity can be fluid for some people and fixed for others, Parker said. Thirty percent of the multiracial adults said they had described themselves as something other than multiracial earlier in their lives, she said.

"Being multiracial is not just a sum of the races in your family tree," she said. "It's also part of experiences and upbringing and it also can be fluid and change over the life course or when an individual is in a certain set of circumstances."

Biracial white and American Indians are the only multiracial group that leans toward the GOP, with the [Republican Party](#) holding a 53-42 percent advantage over the Democrats, the report said. All of the other mixed-race groups — white-Asian, black-white, black-Native American, and black-white-Native American — favored the Democrats by large numbers.

Like the rest of the United States' demographics, the composition of the mixed-race Americans is changing, the report noted. Thirty-six percent of mixed race babies born in 2012 were biracial white and black and 24 percent were biracial white and Asia. Only 12 percent were white and American Indian, Parker said.

"That doesn't necessarily dictate how they will identify when they grow up, but it's sort of an indicator of maybe a shifting composition," she said.

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/pew-white-native-american-adults-largest-multiracial-group-31682250?singlePage=true>

Madison schools ban clothing with Native American logos

June 11, 2015 7:55 am • By [Cassidy McDonald](#) | [Wisconsin State Journal](#)



Madison West High School sophomore Vaughn Bahr, left, and senior Gabriel Saiz, converse in the hallway of the school. The students, and several other members of the school's Native American Student Association, favor the school district's ban on clothing that features Native logos and mascots used by sports teams.

Madison public school students will no longer be allowed to wear clothing with Native American athletic team names, logos or mascots that depict “negative stereotypes” while at school, after the Madison School Board voted to enact the rule in a unanimous vote last month.

The policy, which goes into effect this fall, might be the first of its kind for a school district, according to students who drafted the proposal.

The new policy also mandates that Madison schools ask visiting teams to leave Native American mascots and logos at home when they play a Madison school. If the other school does not comply, the game may be canceled.

And it would ban other clothing with “negative stereotypes” of race, gender, religion and other characteristics.

Gabriel Saiz, a junior at West High School and a member of the Ponca Tribe, worked with student government and other Native American students to draft the new policy and propose it to the board. He said the proposal wasn't based on anything he'd seen before.

“We're here to destroy an aspect of our oppression,” he said. “People can say whatever they want, but I don't want representations of how you see us and how you want us to

act, because that's going to destroy self-esteem and make the school less safe for Native students."

Chris Ahmuty, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, said the policy was vague. He advised schools to enforce it carefully, and refrain from punishing students who don't intend for their clothing to be offensive.

Tim Fish, the Title VII Indian Education coordinator in the Madison School District, said the movement began when Native American students, who make up less than 1 percent of the city school's student population, told him they felt invisible. He created the Native American Student Association, and the group's first priority was to ban clothing that members deemed harmful, he said.

The rule won't outlaw all Native American names and logos, Fish said. The ban focuses exclusively on sports teams with Native American names.

Before the 2015-16 school year begins, the Native American Student Association will work with the district to publish a list of prohibited logos and team names, which Saiz said will include teams such as the Chicago Blackhawks and Florida State Seminoles.

He said that even though a few Native groups don't find those team names offensive, they will still be banned because, as sports teams with Native names, they create a negative stereotype.

While some schools in the district have Native American names — such as Black Hawk Middle School — none has an athletic team or mascot based on Native Americans.

That means a student could wear a shirt from Black Hawk Middle School because its athletic teams use a wolf as a mascot. A shirt that reads "Chicago Blackhawks," however, would be banned, because it's a professional hockey team that uses a Native American name and mascot.

If a student breaks the rule, the school will treat it like any other dress code violation, Fish said. A teacher can ask the student to turn the clothing inside out, go home and change or put something over the logo. If a student refuses to change, the school reserves the right to suspend or expel the student, according to the district's policies and procedures.

Fish said the student group will help develop a training program to instruct teachers on how to enforce the new policy.

Dress code

The district's Behavior Education Plan contains an existing dress code policy: "Generally, students may dress in any style they desire as long as their chosen attire does

not cause a disruption or distraction in the school environment, reveal intimate body parts or pose a safety risk to the student or others.”

The policy lists other prohibited items, such as hats, exposed bras, large metal chains and pants that are too low.

The district said next year, the policy will also prohibit “clothing with words, pictures or caricatures based on negative stereotypes of a specific gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Students may not wear shirts, hats or other attire with Native American team names, logos or mascots that depict negative stereotypes. A list of team names, logos and mascots prohibited under this provision is available at all schools and on the District website.”

Learning environment

Ahmuty said the section of the policy that outlaws negative stereotypes has “a real problem with vagueness.” He asked, “How are students supposed to know what a negative stereotype is?”

And while the School Board will provide a list of prohibited Native American team names, Ahmuty said it’s not realistic to do the same for all negative stereotypes.

He said the part of the policy that outlaws Native American team names and logos was well-intentioned but must be enforced carefully. Schools can legally limit their students’ speech, but only when there is evidence that the speech is disruptive or harmful to the learning environment, he said.

He said the new policy presumes that an individual student — as opposed to a school or a district — can create a harmful environment and that might not be the case.

“Shouldn’t we look at these things individually instead of on the basis of fear?” he said.

But Carrie Bohman, a West High School history teacher, said one student’s clothing can create a harmful environment.

“If I see a student wearing a T-shirt that is anti-Semitic, anti-African-American, even anti-female, I have to respond to that,” she said. “That’s part of our mission statement. Even if one person may feel uncomfortable, that’s a hostile learning environment.”

Psychological impact

Daphna Oyserman, a psychology professor at the University of Southern California who has researched the effects of Native American mascots and logos, said the amount of psychological harm a race-based logo can cause depends on the racial group.

“If there are plenty of other ways in which your group is represented, maybe it does not matter,” Oyersman said, “If your group is otherwise invisible and this is pretty much the only way that your group is present in the public sphere ... that is the image that comes to mind when people think of your group.”

In a school setting, Oyersman said that her research found mascot images reduced the importance of school in students’ future self-image.

And, she said that contextual cues in a learning environment are very powerful in shaping future self-identities and current actions.

“Small changes in context matter for everyone. It is not just Native Americans,” Oyersman said.

She said that while students wearing a Native American logo may not see themselves as bullies, they imply that their right to wear the logo is more important than Native Americans’ rights to define their own group separate from sports-based images.

Read more: http://host.madison.com/news/local/education/local_schools/madison-schools-ban-clothing-with-native-american-logos/article_032e1cda-40d7-5e09-a2f3-5b5e64ea3607.html#ixzz3d9Uc4X6K

Running Bear educates on Native American history



Running Bear, owner of Running Bear’s Trading Post, sits outside of his tipi village at the Waldo Farmers and Flea Market Sunday. The tipis are decorated with traditional Native American items.

Posted: Thursday, June 11, 2015 12:26 am | *Updated: 12:34 am, Thu Jun 11, 2015.*

Elise Engle, Alligator Contributing Writer

Running Bear brought his tipi village out to the Waldo Farmers and Flea Market on Saturday, and it was filled with a collection of items from the Oglala Lakota tribe.

As a storyteller and historian for the Lakota tribe, Running Bear — who was born and raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota and owns the Running Bear's Trading Post — said he hopes to use the tipi village to provide an opportunity for visitors to learn more about Native Americans.

He will be returning to the market every weekend.

“(I want) to teach the children and give them some education about the true way of the native people,” he said.

The village consists of two tipis that are constructed of tan canvas on wood frames and decorated inside with furs and skins. Tipi is the Lakota spelling of the English word “teepee.”

The largest tipi is the size of 13 buffalo hides, Running Bear said. Some Lakota Indians still live in tipis like the ones he has on display.

He said there were once 70 children packed into the tipi quietly listening to his stories. The stories Running Bear shared primarily focused on the American government's oppression of Native Americans.

Running Bear is his legal name, but he said the federal government also requires him to have a “Christian” name, which is Patrick McCormack.

Peggy McCormack, Running Bear's wife, has hand-made crafts for sale near the tipis. Although she has very little Native American blood, she said she has developed an interest in the culture and the art.

She said she taught herself how to weave baskets out of wet pine needles and string.

She has continued to learn new skills, and she said she hopes to pass them on to those who visit the tipi village.

“I don't mind teaching other people,” said McCormack. “You can charge, but why would I want to charge a little kid or a teenager, you know?”

McCormack said passing on an art that is nearly extinct is more important to her than a profit, and she plans to teach visitors something new every week.

“That's basically why I do this,” McCormack said.

She said she considers her job to be similar to Running Bear's.

"He's trying to teach history and heritage that is not taught anymore," she said.

McCormack said she enjoys creating new things out of something old, such as the bags and friendship bracelets she had for sale that were made out of worn-out T-shirts.

Running Bear said he plans to be at the farmers market with his tipi village each weekend from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and he is looking forward to giving others the opportunity to hear the Lakota tribe's unique stories.

"We had our own languages here," he said. "We had our own culture, our own way of life."

Direct Link: http://www.alligator.org/news/local/article_d6290346-0ff2-11e5-bb28-d79a46954c81.html